

PRO FOOTBALL '83

Action Photos and Inside Stories of Football's Top Players



by Bear Kirow

PRO FOOTBALL '83

***Stars,
Photographs,
and League
Records***

by Bear Kirow

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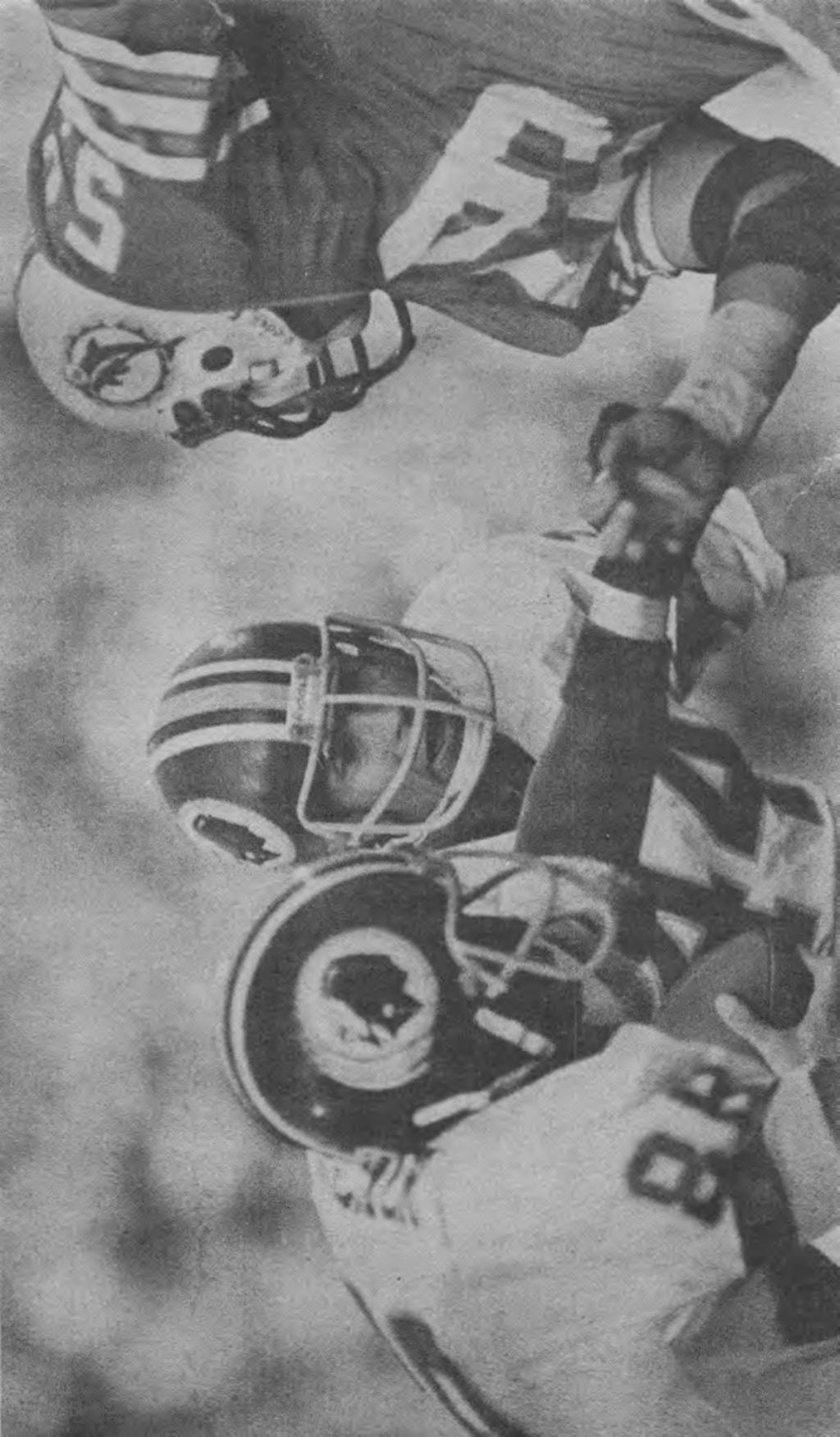
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PROFILES





John Riggins

This was the moment that just might decide Super Bowl XVII.

The crowd of 103,667 in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, waited anxiously. More than 100 million viewers watched on TV across the nation.

The Washington Redskins, in burgundy and gold uniforms, came to the line of scrimmage. The Miami Dolphins, in aqua and orange, lined up to meet them.

The lights of the stadium had been turned on in the gloaming, and the players' helmets glistened.

This was the situation:

Fourth and final quarter. Miami led, 17–13. Four minutes and 59 seconds had passed in the 15-minute quarter. Washington was on the Miami 48-yard line, and it was fourth down and just inches to go for a first down.

If Miami held the Redskins, the Dolphins would take over the ball—in good field position to score again and put the game out of reach.

John Riggins hits the line.

But if the Redskins scored. . . .

Before the game, Washington coach Joe Gibbs had told his team: "This game will be won by John—but we've got to help John."

He was referring to John Riggins, the 6-foot, 3-inch, 235-pound fullback for the Redskins who, at age 33, was having the best year of his career. He was at an age when most running backs had long since retired to nurse their sore bones.

Riggins is curious in other ways. He is a strongly independent man who, some feel, has odd quirks. One year he wore his hair in an Afro, the next it was a Mohawk cut, and the next he shaved his head completely. And on the Friday night before the Super Bowl, at the Redskins' team party, he arrived resplendent in white tie and tails.

But in the game, there was nothing strange about him. He was an effective, pounding runner.

Joe Theismann, the Washington quarterback, was under the center and calling a play. The Redskins put a man in motion, which drew the linebacker, Don McNeal, to the right side.

The snap, and Theismann handed off to Riggins. Riggins hit left tackle. There was a crush at the line of scrimmage, and then Riggins broke free. The Dolphins had been lined up heavily to stop the short plunge for the attempted first down, and now Riggins looked as if he would break away.

McNeal had to hurry over, and suddenly he was the last and only man who could stop Riggins. McNeal hit him high, and then just seemed to slither off.

Riggins turned on the steam and sped into the

end zone. Touchdown! Then he turned and, unlike some players who perform a variety of weird dances after they score, Riggins simply tossed the ball to the referee. He had done his job—and then some. After the extra point, the Redskins led, 20–17. There was just one more score in the game—and this again by Washington. Theismann threw a 6-yard TD pass to Charlie Brown. But Riggins set it up with eight carries for 22 yards.

When it was over, the Redskins had won, 27–17, and were Super Bowl champions for the first time in history. Riggins was unanimously named Most Valuable Player in the Super Bowl.

In the dressing room after the game, President Reagan phoned Coach Gibbs. "Would John mind," asked the president, "if I changed my spelling so it had an *i* and a couple of *g's* in it?"

No, he didn't think Riggins would mind, Gibbs responded with a laugh.

Someone later asked Riggins if he'd like to change places with the president.

"No," said Riggins, "he's the president, but for today, anyway, I'm king." And no one disputed that.

John Riggins is reported to be earning \$300,000 annually with Washington, but he, more than any of his teammates, has been responsible for the \$70,000 in postseason bonuses that the Redskins have collected as Super Bowl champions.

In lifting the Redskins to a 12–1 record, including the four postseason games, Riggins rushed for a total of 610 yards—119 against the Detroit Lions, 185 against the Minnesota Vikings, 140 against the Dallas

Cowboys, and 166 in Super Bowl XVII. Riggins broke the Super Bowl record of 158 yards set by Franco Harris of the Pittsburgh Steelers in a 16-6 victory over the Vikings in Super Bowl IX.

Riggins is a great clutch player. He gained more yardage in the four postseason games than he did in the nine games of the regular season—610 yards compared to 553 yards.

Before the first postseason game, Riggins told Coach Gibbs, "Give me the ball—I think I can bring the team a championship."

After the Super Bowl game, in which he had been given the ball a record number of times (38), Riggins said, "I wanted the ball, but I didn't think I'd get it *that* much!"

For all intents and purposes, it seemed that Riggins had retired after the 1980 season. He had had a contract dispute with the Redskins and sat out the entire year. He went back to his home in Lawrence, Kansas, where he painted and hunted pheasant and quail with his two brothers.

"If you had told me 24 months ago that I was going to be playing in the Super Bowl," said Riggins, "I'd have said you were crazy."

The one-year absence left his running skills unaffected. His bruising "Mack-truck" style of running is complemented by the speed of a sprinter—he was the Kansas schoolboy champion in the 100-yard dash, with a time of 9.8—remarkable for someone of his size and weight.

He's also a man who marches to the beat of a different drummer. He wore turquoise jewelry. He

drove a motorcycle to training camp. When he lived in New York and played for the Jets, he lived in Greenwich Village. He decorated his apartment there with a jukebox and a barber chair. Then, as now, he often wore combat boots and Army camouflage pants, smoked a black cigar, and played tricks on his nearest teammate.

How does he explain his antics?

"I wouldn't call them crazy," he said. "I'm just expressing myself. I like to do what I like to do at the moment. I'm spontaneous, but I like to think I'm in control of the situation."

"For example, I grew the Mohawk for the fun of it. I wanted to show everybody I was my own boss."

Coach Gibbs said, "He's a team guy and very intelligent, very motivated. But he's going to set his own path in life. I think he prides himself in doing things a little different."

Riggins grew up with his brothers, Frank and Billy, in Centralia in northeastern Kansas, where their father, F. E. Riggins, is a depot agent and their mother, Mildred, a courthouse clerk. The town had 500 residents and no street signs, though there are signs now.

Frank is 35 and Billy 30, and they are salesmen for competing office-equipment companies in Kansas City. They, like John, were running backs at the University of Kansas.

"He's unique," said Frank of John. "He's been that way in grade school, high school, everything."

Frank added, "You know, I don't really know what he thinks."

When John was asked to describe himself, he said, "I'd rather not."

It is left to others.

To begin with, one goes by the record books: This season, he became the seventh-leading rusher in history—his 8,089 yards trailing only Jim Brown's 12,312, followed by O. J. Simpson, Franco Harris, Walter Payton, Joe Perry, and Jim Taylor's 8,597.

Few, though, are as tough down the stretch. This past season, he averaged only 2.4 yards per carry in the first quarter, but 4.0 yards in the final quarter.

Immediately after the Super Bowl game, Mike Lupica of the New York *Daily News* wrote this final impression of Riggins:

"We will long remember a raging bull of a fullback named John Riggins, who, about now, is probably heading east on the Santa Monica Freeway, running over compact cars, stiffarming the bigger ones, and maybe looking a tractor trailer right in the eye."



Joe Theismann

Little Joe Theismann. People once said it to ridicule him. Now it is said with admiration.

He has grown since his high-school days when people said he wasn't big enough to play big-time college ball. He showed them, of course, starring at Notre Dame and becoming one of the best quarterbacks in the school's history—a school known for its history of illustrious quarterbacks.

He weighed only about 150 pounds when he graduated from high school in New Brunswick, New Jersey. But now, as quarterback of the Washington Redskins, he's bigger—at 5-feet, 10-inches, 190 pounds. But he's still relatively small in comparison to the giants who play the game, and even to the other quarterbacks.

In Super Bowl XVII, Theismann seemed to pale in physical stature to the Dolphins' two signal-callers, 6-2 David Woodley and 6-5 Don Strock.

But when the game ended, it was Little Joe who had led his team to victory, with the Redskins winning, 27–17.



Theismann created many of Miami's defensive problems by his use of scrambles, dodges, rollout passes, and play-action fakes, a technique in which he fakes a handoff before a pass. He ran for important yardage and passed for two touchdowns.

"They had so much movement," said Dolphin linebacker A. J. Duhe, "that sometimes we got confused."

Oddly enough, Theismann, the outstanding offensive threat, may have made the most crucial play of the day—and it was a *defensive* play.

Joe Theismann on defense? What?

This is what happened:

The Redskins were trailing, 17–13, in the last minute of the third period. On the first-down play from Washington's 18, Theismann, scrambling to his left, threw toward wide receiver Charlie Brown. But Kim Bokamper, the Dolphins' 6-foot, 6-inch defensive end, charged in and threw up his arms to block the pass.

He got his hand on the ball, knocking it up in the air, and it looked like open daylight to the end zone for a touchdown that could have demoralized the Redskins and put the game away for Miami. The ball dropped into his hands.

But what happened?

Theismann raced over and, just as the big defensive end was about to clutch the ball and take only a few steps into the end zone, Little Joe leaped up and swatted the ball out of Bokamper's hands.

"It would have been the nail in the coffin for us," said Theismann after the game. "As the ball came

Joe Theismann seeks a receiver.

down, Bokamper kept getting bigger and bigger and I kept getting smaller and smaller. God, is he big! What I tried to do was dive in the air and knock it away. If he had caught it, it would have been a horrible feeling."

Theismann did have that horrible feeling before the half on a pass completion to Alvin Garrett, the back they call "The Smurf." The play ran out the clock and denied the Redskins an opportunity for at least a field goal. The 'Skins, trailing 17-10, were at the Miami 16 with 14 seconds to play and no timeouts.

The expected thing was to pass into the end zone, or throw a sideline pass that could be run out of bounds, or a throwaway, if no receiver is open. Theismann's 10-yard completion to Garrett, several feet in-bounds, merely killed the clock for the first half.

"The play bothered me more than anything," said Theismann. "I hate to give up points like that. When I got back into the dressing room, I told myself, 'Shucks, you made a stupid play.' "

But in the second half he more than redeemed himself, demonstrating the confidence, the charisma, and the ability that has marked his entire career.

He was a star quarterback in high school, teaming up with Drew Pearson (now of the Dallas Cowboys) in an exciting touchdown duo. More than 100 colleges wanted him. One of them was Notre Dame—but only marginally. One newspaper article said Theismann couldn't make it at Notre Dame, that he was too small. The headline read, "Little Joe Will

Get Killed at Notre Dame." Theismann pasted the offending article on his bedroom wall, packed his bags, and headed for South Bend, Indiana, in the fall of 1966.

"All my life I've been told I can't do things—either because I was too small or in the wrong place," he said. "If you want to get something done, tell me I can't do it."

"When I finally showed up at Notre Dame, they had all these quarterbacks who were about 6-3 or 6-4. But I just looked at it as another challenge. I decided I was going to be the best of them all and be the best quarterback in Notre Dame history."

Theismann became the starting quarterback in his sophomore year. He came close to winning the Heisman Trophy, emblematic of the best college football player in the country, in 1970, his senior year, but was beaten out by Stanford quarterback Jim Plunkett.

So on the day of the Heisman announcement, Theismann was less than disgruntled. In fact, it was a day of celebration for him. He and Cheryl Brown, a secretary in the Notre Dame sports information department, slipped down to City Hall to take out their marriage license.

Joe Theismann has always been full of surprises.

In the pro football draft the following February, Colts' coach Don McCafferty said there were four good quarterbacks in the upcoming NFL draft: "Archie Manning of Mississippi, Jim Plunkett of Stanford, Dan Pastorini of Santa Clara, and Lynn Dickey of Kansas State."

Theismann was not mentioned, despite his 526

yards passing in the season's final game against USC in the mud of the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Theismann finally was taken by the Miami Dolphins on the fourth round, but Bob Griese was young and on top of his game.

"I didn't want to be sitting on the bench for years behind Griese," said Theismann. Because he and the Dolphins couldn't agree on terms, the Notre Dame quarterback emigrated to Canada and the Toronto Argonauts.

"And, of course, you know what happened to Griese," Theismann recalls. "He got hurt the next year, Earl Morrall took over for him, and all those good things happened. Two Super Bowls for the Dolphins while I'm running around up in Canada. That could have been me instead of Morrall."

But after three years with Toronto, Theismann signed with the Redskins in 1974 and, as reporter Michael Madden noted, immediately became the most sensational third-string quarterback in the NFL.

His book, *Quarterbacking*, was reissued and he opened a restaurant in the Washington area. "I guess I was the only third-stringer with those two things going for him, and I was doing personal appearances, commercials, everything—and I wasn't even playing."

Things got even better when he broke into the lineup—but that wasn't easy, either.

He had been playing behind veterans Sonny Jurgensen and Billy Kilmer. But they were getting older, and the 'Skins were mediocre.

With Theismann at quarterback, things didn't

change overnight. In fact, at the beginning of the 1981 season, the Redskins lost their first five games.

Theismann shouldered the blame. "I kept trying to thread the needle on my passes," he said. "I was too tight."

One night he stopped by Coach Joe Gibbs's house and the two talked for several hours.

"It was a time Joe was really searching," said Gibbs. "The tendency is, when things go bad, to go through a period of self-doubt. But Joe's a strong person, and he stayed with his convictions and his confidence. We came to understand where we were, who we were, and what we were trying to do. We came out stronger. The next week we won."

They continued winning, and Joe became a true sensation.

"I was no longer forcing the situation," said Joe. "Like, if we have a third-and-15, and the receivers are covered downfield, but the back is open 5 yards over the line of scrimmage, now I'll hit the back. Maybe he can get the rest of the yardage on his own." About his interceptions, he added, "After you make enough tackles,"—he laughed, referring to his attempt to tackle the opponent who had intercepted his pass—"you smarten up."

Little Joe, Super Bowl champion quarterback, has obviously gotten wiser—and better.





Mark Gastineau

Look out! Here comes Mark Gastineau!

The New York Jets' 6-foot-5, 275-pound defensive end crashes in to sack the quarterback, then leaps up and whirls and howls and thrashes his arms as if he is either doing a war dance or trying to get rid of a bee that has flown inside his pants.

Neither is the case. This is Gastineau's victory celebration for having thrown the quarterback for a loss.

There are none better in the National Football League at sacking the quarterback than Mark Gastineau.

Nor any more controversial.

He was condemned by rival fans—and even some of his teammates—for his posttackle exuberance, but he was cheered by hometown supporters and by some of his teammates.

In the Jets' last game of the season against the Dolphins at the Orange Bowl in Miami, in which

New York lost the American Conference championship contest, 14-0, Gastineau tackled quarterback David Woodley for a 7-yard loss and Gastineau went into his Mad-Hatter's spin. A Miami fan threw an orange at him.

"I hate Mark Gastineau," said a loyal Dolphin fan in the stands.

"And I hate his mother," the fan added.

Why his mother? the fan was asked.

"Because she had *him*," the fan replied.

Gastineau's sack came in the first quarter and on Miami's third play of the game. Then the first time the Dolphins took the ball in the second half, after Gastineau recovered an apparent fumble, he wound up and spiked the ball into the sloppy turf. It was at that moment that Gastineau began to face what Malcolm Moran of the *New York Times* called "his first healthy helping of humble pie."

The officials ruled there was no fumble, which made his premature celebration appear foolish. Five plays later, the Dolphins scored the touchdown that was the beginning of the end of the Jet season.

Midway through the fourth quarter, two touchdowns behind, Gastineau tackled Woodley for a 13-yard loss and his second sack, but he stopped his celebration before it started. He was not credited with any other tackles. Statistically, at least, he had not had one of his best days. (He has made as many as five and six sacks in a game.)

But overall, Sunday, January 23, 1983, was not a good day for the Jets.

They played in a hard rain on a muddy field in a bitter rival's hometown, and they couldn't score.

In the locker room afterward, Gastineau's arms were raised while wearing his green Jet jersey so that tape could be cut from the end of his sleeves.

And when he said that this was the most frustrating loss of his career, there was no question that his emotions were genuine. Earlier in the season, though, those emotions were suspect, even by his own teammates.

A comember of the Jets' Sack Exchange was quoted in *Inside Sports Magazine* as saying about Gastineau's jumping, "It's just not a class act. Coach Bryant would have run us off the field if we did that."

Marty Lyons, who played for Paul "Bear" Bryant at Alabama, also said in the article, "This is your living. You're supporting your wife and kids. It's embarrassing enough for an offensive lineman when you beat him for a sack, let alone doing that. You're talking about respect."

When Lyons was questioned later about the quote, he said, "As long as he does his job, he's fine."

Defensive right end Joe Klecko, another member of the Sack Exchange, said, "Put yourself in the position of the opponent and the guy beats you for a sack and then stands over you acting like a mad banshee."

But Abdul Salaam, the defensive line's other member, and Marvin Powell, the team's offensive right tackle, against whom Gastineau is matched in practice, cited the positive influences of Gastineau's enthusiasm.

"His enthusiasm is contagious," Powell said. "He is *bona fide*."

Defensive coach Joe Gardi acknowledged that on every team there are "petty jealousies."

In the end, it didn't have an effect on the team because Gastineau was such a fine team player.

The jealousies referred to by Gardi had to do with Gastineau's popularity in commercials and as a celebrity, brought about by his high visibility on the field.

The background to that is odd.

Mark Gastineau's mother cried when she learned that the New York Jets had chosen her son in the 1979 college football draft.

Mrs. Gastineau, an Oklahoman named Lou, said that she imagined her boy would be ruined by the city's ominous canyons and teeming streets.

But the sidewalks of New York shone and glittered for Mrs. Gastineau—especially since, in June 1982, she signed a \$60,000, three-year deal with Norelco shavers to appear with Mark in television commercials.

New York is the place if one is to make it as a celebrity in commercials, but none has made it bigger than Gastineau, who earned more than \$200,000 in commercials, appearances, and speaking fees during 1982. That amount is more than double his salary.

Gastineau also got rewards such as a lucrative deal with Norelco (\$150,000 for three years—better than his mom's deal), and others with an underwear company, an athletic shoe company, for jeans, and one even for a pickup truck endorsement.

He also has found time to spend with such new

friends as Sylvester Stallone, with whom he was working on a movie, and for working out with the famed star in a Manhattan boxing gym.

All this from his exuberance on the football field—and off it.

"I do that jumping around on the field to release emotions," said Gastineau. "It's a tremendous feeling, getting to the quarterback. I don't do it to embarrass anyone. I don't go over and do it in the offensive tackle or quarterback's face. The only thing going to stop me from doing it is the coaches or the club president (Jim Kensil)."

And what he does, he does very well.

"I think the man could become the best defensive end ever to play the game," said Marvin Powell. "Going against Gastineau is like going up against the Indy 500 speed race. He doesn't just move; he accelerates with speed and finesse. He can shake and bake you and leave you standing there; he can run over; he can do anything he wants. He learns awfully quickly, and he has great second effort. I have driven Gastineau to the sidelines in practice, and I've seen him race across the field to make the tackle on the other side."

Mark and his father, Ernie, who is also a large man, arm-wrestled and boxed and held foot races against each other—that is when Mark wasn't out roping calves in hometown rodeos.

His mother, Lou, is a fairly large-sized woman herself—"stout" is her word—and she keeps the family in line.

"If there's anybody in the world I'm afraid of,"

said Mark, "it's my mother. She's part Cherokee Indian, and when she gets mad, you'd better watch out."

After Mark's success in New York, Lou is not quite as afraid for her boy as she was when he left the West for the Big Apple.

Not only has she made it in a commercial for a hefty salary, but Mark's father has been hired as an underwear salesman for the company for which Mark is making T-shirt and briefs commercials!

"You know how my parents felt when I first got drafted," said Gastineau. "But it's funny that not long ago my mother said to me, 'If I didn't have two more kids at home, I think I'd move to New York.' "



Tony Dorsett

On Monday night, January 3, 1983, in the last game of the regular season, Tony Dorsett of the Dallas Cowboys took a handoff from his quarterback and hit the Minnesota Vikings' line in what seemed a routine play to gain a couple of yards, to get his team out of the shadow of the goal line.

The Cowboys were on their own 1-yard line. Dorsett was hit, but didn't go down, hit again, and didn't go down. He was on the 5, now the 10. He began to pick up a blocker here and a blocker there, dodging and squirming and shifting right with a fake of his hip, and then going left.

The crowd of 60,007 in the domed Hubert H. Humphrey Stadium began to rise to their feet in disbelief, stunned at what they were seeing.

Now, Dorsett, in his blue-starred uniform, cut for the sidelines at the 30, the 40, and his legs began to churn, leaving a sprawl of Vikings on the turf. The 50, now the 40—and he was open and free and all alone. In a moment he jubilantly crossed



the goal line. The Viking fans were amazed. Tony Dorsett had just made the longest touchdown run from scrimmage in the history of the National Football League.

It is possible to make a longer run—on a kickoff or a punt—but not from a play from scrimmage. No part of the ball ever can be over the goal line prior to the snap. Even if the ball is placed one inch from the goal line, statistically it is considered to be at the 1-yard line.

So, the 99-yard TD run is guaranteed to keep Dorsett in the record books forever. Nobody can go any further.

The touchdown run also brought the Cowboys back into the game, and now made the score 27–13. The Vikings were battling for a spot in the National Conference playoffs, while the Cowboys had already gained a place. But still the Cowboys hoped to go into the playoffs on an upbeat note.

It wasn't to be. The Vikings won, 31–27.

Meanwhile, Dorsett gained personal satisfaction. His 153 yards gained in 16 carries gave him a total of 745 yards in 177 carries and made him the final official rushing leader in the NFC for the nine-game season. His average was 4.2 yards per carry—good, but down from the previous year when it was 4.8, and when he came in second in total rushing in the conference to George Rogers.

But there were harsher things he endured in the 1982 season.

The 28-year-old Dorsett awoke at 2 A.M. on December 23 with sharp pains in his chest. He was

Tony Dorsett breaks clear.

convinced he was having a heart attack. Immediately his wife rushed him to a local Dallas hospital.

Dorsett's brother, Melvin, had died of a heart attack at age 27 when Tony was in the ninth grade. Fear of death at an early age had haunted him ever since.

Only when the tests were completed—showing that spasms from a back injury suffered in the December 13 Houston game had radiated into his chest—was Dorsett's mind put at ease.

When he came home, he was ready again to play football.

But things still were shaky for Dorsett. In their game against Philadelphia, three days after Dorsett's scare, the Cowboys lost, 24–20, and Tony gained only 69 yards in 24 carries.

After the game, he questioned the game plan of the Cowboys' respected coach Tom Landry.

"We've put a lot of emphasis on the passing game," said Dorsett. "But we seem to be taking the running game for granted. We've had a tendency lately to put in a lot of new plays during the game. That may have something to do with the shape of our running game."

"It should be our No. 1 priority. I don't give a darn whom we're playing. The coaches have to take it upon themselves to get it going again."

The Dallas coach felt that Dorsett's statements were reflections of his frustrations over a failure to break a long run. Defenses had been increasing their focus on stopping Dorsett, a fact that explains why Dallas's passing game had been so successful.

"Running is tough everywhere," said Landry. "Some of the plays we were running very well last year haven't been open for us. This year we just haven't gotten Tony in position to break one."

Dorsett's longest run prior to the Vikings' finale was just 19 yards.

"He should be frustrated," added Landry. "They all want to break the long ones and do the things they do best and I'm with them." "Them," meaning running backs. "It's not unusual for a guy to be frustrated."

Now the Cowboys were in the playoffs, and in the second round on January 16, the Cowboys whipped the Packers, 37-26, with Dorsett leading all rushers with 99 yards gained in 27 carries. They advanced to meet the Redskins in Washington for the conference title.

Dallas had lost both previous NFC championship games, to Philadelphia in 1981 and to San Francisco the year after.

The Cowboys vowed it wouldn't happen a third time.

"We've been in this situation before," said Dorsett, "and we're hoping the third time is the charm."

It wasn't.

The Cowboys lost, 31-17. Perhaps the most frustrating moment for Dorsett and the Cowboys came with less than seven minutes remaining in the game. Dallas was losing by just one touchdown, 24-17. Quarterback Gary Hogeboom, replacing Danny White who was injured earlier in the game, threw a screen pass intended for Dorsett. The Cowboys were

deep in their own territory. (The last time something like this had occurred, Dorsett ran 99 yards for a touchdown.)

But now defensive lineman Dexter Manley of the Redskins tipped the pass, and it came down in the hands of Darryl Grant, the Redskins' defensive tackle, at the Dallas 10.

Grant ran to the end zone for Washington's fourth and final touchdown. The touchdown changed the outlook of the game. From being 7 points down, the Cowboys were 14 points behind. The game was all but over, and Dorsett left the game.

And yet for all the glory and disappointment, Dorsett maintains an emotional balance. He is a dedicated and serious athlete because, he has said, of seeing his father come home from work every night in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania.

Tony's dad worked in a dark, loud, blasting steel mill. Tony once visited his father at work and will never forget the experience.

The elder Dorsett was so covered with soot that young Tony couldn't recognize him. Tony, scared that the same fate might befall him, promised himself he'd never work there, and endeavored to develop his great natural athletic skills.

Being a star of his caliber has made Dorsett a marked man. He has been the target of "cheap shots" by some opponents throughout his career. The other team has tried to put the rival star out of commission. But Tony is strong and resilient and motivated, and if he is hit, he bounces back unusually quickly.

But he has also learned to avoid unnecessary contact. Once, in fact, Gale Sayers, the former great running back, criticized Dorsett for that. Sayers said that Dorsett was too much in a hurry to run the ball out of bounds, rather than bruise ahead for an extra yard or two.

"That's bull," said Dorsett. "I don't see how Sayers can say that I'm not tough enough and I try to run for the sideline. I'm not a punishing runner. I'm a finesse runner. And if I see I'm going to be stopped, I'm going out of bounds."

"But not unless I see I can't get any more yards."

And he has been getting more yards than just about anyone else running a football in the pros.

Whatever he's doing, he most certainly seems to be doing it right.





Marcus Allen

What was going on? It was a day in February 1983, in New York City and the National Football League college draft was in progress in the chandeliered, hotel grand ballroom. One team after another had made selections in the first round, and yet no one had picked Marcus Allen.

No one had to ask who Marcus Allen was. He had been the Heisman Trophy winner for the 1982 college season—the trophy is emblematic, of course, of the best college football player in the country. Allen was the star running back for the University of Southern California.

The voting wasn't even close. Allen had received 441 first-place votes to 152 for runner-up Herschel Walker. How good was Allen? After Allen had shredded Indiana University for 274 yards and two touchdowns in the second game of the season, Indiana coach Lee Corso said, "Give him the Heisman now."

It seemed that, without question, Allen was the

finest running back eligible in the draft—Walker was only a college sophomore—so what was wrong?

Well, some pro scouts regarded him as too slow, even though he had just set 12 National Collegiate Athletic Association records, including the most impressive, a single-season mark of 2,342 yards rushing.

"We heard from other people," said Al LoCasale, the executive assistant of the Los Angeles Raiders, "that he was a little slow. We heard also some other people say anybody could gain those yards behind Southern Cal's line. Marcus also bore with him the fact that the last two USC tailbacks had not done well in the pros. Charles White did not have an illustrious career at that point and Ricky Bell hadn't done much."

But the Raiders, nonetheless, were highly interested in Allen. They were picking 10th in the draft, however, and didn't think they'd have a chance at him.

New England opened the draft proceedings by picking, as expected, Ken Sims', Texas's outstanding defensive lineman. Baltimore picked a linebacker from Mississippi State named Johnie Cooks. So it went. The team selecting seventh in the first round was Minnesota and they chose a running back—but it wasn't Allen. It was Darrin Nelson of Stanford. Houston picked a guard, and Atlanta chose Gerald Riggs, running back for Arizona State.

Some wondered if anyone would pick Allen at all.

"You know, I don't usually pay attention to the draft," said Gene Upshaw, the Raiders' veteran

guard. "But this year I watched, and as it got closer to the time we would pick and Marcus was still on the board, I thought, *What's the matter with these other teams?*

"Then it was our turn, and I knew there was no way we'd pick anybody else."

Ron Wolf, head of player personnel for the Raiders, was on the draft team in the hotel.

Without hesitation, he said, "The Raiders pick Marcus Allen of USC."

Other teams are members of scouting pools, and there is a kind of consensus scouting. The Raiders are known as the mavericks of the league—in fact, their managing general partner, Al Davis, successfully sued the NFL and the other 27 teams who had tried to stop him from moving the club from Oakland to Los Angeles. Well, the Raiders belong to no scouting pool. They do it all on their own.

"We knew Allen could do everything for us," said LoCasale. "Before the draft, we spoke to a coach at Oklahoma. I remember him telling me how the Oklahoma players were pounding on Allen late in the game. He said, 'We knew who was going to have the ball. We kept pounding on him, play after play. But he kept getting up. Finally, he didn't get tired. We did.' "

On August 14, in the exhibition opener against the San Francisco 49ers, Allen got his first professional carry and picked up nine yards. He continued to roll up yardage that night.

The following week against Detroit, Allen scored his first pro touchdown on a 15-yard pass from Jim

Plunkett. Some scouts apparently had not been aware that Allen could catch as well as run. Among his record-setting senior statistics was this: team-high receptions, 34.

By the week of the third exhibition game, Allen was working out as the team's No. 1 halfback. Kenny King, the Raiders' leading rusher last year, was practicing at fullback, yet King had nothing but praise for his replacement, and Allen returned the favor.

"These guys have made me feel like I was part of things from the start."

"I remember when he first came into the locker room," said Upshaw. "He was just like any rookie, just like everyone else. He didn't try to set himself apart from or above anyone else because he was a No. 1 draft pick or the Heisman winner."

"Then once he opened up and embraced us, it was almost immediate. The reason you never hear a bad word about him is because we all like him—because he's not a kid with a big head. He'll never be that way, either. He's not that kind of kid."

"I guarantee you that eight or nine years from now, you'll watch him and still think he's a rookie."

By that time, according to some of the Raiders, he'll also be on his way to the Hall of Fame.

Allen wound up the nine-game season as the most productive running back in the NFL. Not only did he lead with 14 touchdowns, he also had the best combined rushing-receiving total (1,098 yards—697 rushing, 401 receiving). Only one other back, William Andrews of Atlanta, had 1,000 combined yards.

Allen was named Rookie of the Year and a starter

on the American Conference's Pro Bowl all-star team.

And he certainly was one of the most important reasons that the Raiders went from a 7-9 record in 1981 to 8-1 in 1982.

Could Allen—the first nonkicker rookie since Gale Sayers in 1965 to win the NFL's regular-season scoring title—lead his team to the Super Bowl? On January 8, in the first playoff game, Allen and the Raiders whipped the Cleveland Browns, 27-10. Next came the tough New York Jets.

Before the game, O.J. Simpson, another great USC running back and former all-pro, was asked about Allen's running ability.

"Marcus has developed into one of the finest backs I've ever seen," said Simpson. "He's a pure runner with tremendous arm strength. When he's got the ball, the first tackler doesn't have a chance. Marcus just seems to flow right by that first tackler every time."

"Marcus has that gift of getting into the end zone. There's a special desire that burns in a guy. You know, I never thought Paul Hornung"—the former Packer star—"was a great runner, but from the 20-yard line in, maybe nobody was ever better. Marcus is that way, too."

Against the Jets, however, the goal line eluded him.

The Jets' renowned New York Sack Exchange defense clamped down hard on him. The Jets beat the Raiders, 17-14, and Allen was able to gain only 36 yards on 15 rushes, and his longest run was 8 yards.

Allen was unhappy but not desolate. After all, he had shown the ability to come back on numerous occasions.

In his first regular-season game in the Los Angeles Coliseum as a pro rookie, for example, he rushed for two touchdowns to help the Raiders overcome a 24-point deficit and defeat the San Diego Chargers.

He had done similar things at USC; sometimes it seemed that all he had done was change the colors, from cardinal and gold to silver and black. But Allen also seemed to understand that no matter how good one is, there is still a lot a player can learn.

In the locker room after the defeat by the Jets, Allen was asked how he felt.

"I'm sorry the game had to end this way, and I'm sorry the season had to end this way," he said, "but it's only the end of a game and the end of a season. It's not the end of the world."



Doug Kotar

"Are you on strike, too?" Harry Carson asked.

"Sure," said Doug Kotar, "my picket sign is right underneath my bed here."

Carson and Kotar laughed. Carson, a linebacker, and Kotar, a running back, had been teammates on the Giants. This was in the fall of 1982, and Carson was visiting Kotar in a hospital room in Newark, New Jersey.

The National League Football players were out on strike for increased wages and benefits, but Kotar wasn't going out on any picket line.

Kotar, age 31, lay paralyzed on his entire left side and was undergoing physical therapy and chemotherapy for an inoperable brain tumor. The tumor had been diagnosed as malignant. Now, Kotar was fighting for his life.

Larry Csonka, the former fullback for the Giants and Kotar's ex-roommate, said, "Doug Kotar would dive, claw, scratch—do anything to get the extra yard. He's a tough cookie."



From 1974 through 1981, Douglas Allan Kotar was compiling the yardage—3,380 yards—that would make him the fourth leading rusher in the history of the Giants, behind only Alex Webster, Ron Johnson, and Frank Gifford.

Kotar wasn't the most talented running back in history, but he was one of the most determined. And that made him tough.

Doug Kotar grew up in the small town of Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. It was in this town that he made his name as a standout athlete, and it was here that he would receive "a shoe box full of college offers," according to his brother, Richard.

"No one in this area could catch him once he got a step on you," said Richard Kotar. He was considered the best all-around athlete the area ever produced.

"Once we were in a track meet and we needed the javelin throw to win," said Manuel Pihakis, the athletic director for Canon-McMillan High School. "We called Doug out of the stands. He changed his clothes in the locker room, came out, and threw the javelin farther than anyone. And he never practiced the javelin."

"Doug Kotar," said Pihakis, "was our Superman."

He enrolled at the University of Kentucky and in the first football game he ever played there, the first time he ever touched the ball—on the opening kickoff of the opening game of his sophomore season—he ran the ball back 98 yards against Clemson. Superman strikes again!

Despite injuries during his college career, he was

still a highly regarded running back. Although he wasn't drafted by the pros after his senior year, he maintained confidence in his football ability.

In 1974, he went to the Steelers' camp and was signed as a free agent, but three days later was traded to the Giants.

In an exhibition game against the Jets, he got his chance.

Kotar, wearing a white number 44 on his blue jersey, ran for 56 yards in 14 attempts and scored two touchdowns as the Giants won, 21-13. Kotar was awarded the game ball and, more important, he earned a place on the team. In fact, he was the starting fullback in the Giants' season opener, and he scored the team's touchdown in a 13-10 loss to Washington. Still, shades of Superman.

In a physical sense, things began to change for Kotar in 1980. He missed the entire season when he tore ligaments in his knee in the last exhibition game against the Jets. And he missed the last nine games of the 1981 season when he suffered a shoulder separation.

In the spring of 1982, he came to the Giants' minicamp and went through the paces, but he found he could still not raise his right arm well enough to catch passes, and his knee still had not responded the way he had hoped.

For much of his life, Kotar's driving ambition was to play football. And he did, and played it exceedingly well. Now he made a painful decision. He was going to retire.

"I don't want to quit football," he told Giant coach

Ray Perkins, "but I don't think I can be as effective as I think I ought to."

Perkins was fond of Kotar, a player he felt was the ultimate, hard-driving team player. "I remember when I needed to line him up at fullback and he was too light for the position, but he never complained. I could have lined him up at center and he wouldn't have complained." But Perkins knew what Kotar knew, that he was slipping as a football player, and Perkins is not one to fool himself with sentimentality.

Perkins asked Kotar what he had going for himself. Kotar said possibly a beer distributorship, or he might invest in a racquetball club.

But he never did either.

On August 14, suffering from severe headaches he thought had developed when he hit his head in a pool while playing water volleyball, he checked into the New Jersey hospital for tests.

A tumor the size of a golf ball was revealed. The doctors weren't sure if it were benign or malignant, and only an exploratory operation could determine that.

"He seemed in good spirits," said Brian Kelley, a Giant linebacker, after a visit with Kotar.

But Kotar would later confide, "I'm scared. This isn't a knee."

The tumor, it was discovered, was malignant and in such a place that would make an operation to remove it impossible.

When the doctor told him, Kotar looked at him with stunned eyes. He knew what it meant. Two

weeks to live? Two months to live? Two years to live? Death could come quickly, or it could be somewhat prolonged. Unless there were a miracle.

"And miracles," Doug's wife, Donna, told him, "do happen. Don't give up. Fight."

At first he said there was nothing to live for, that he didn't want to live, but slowly he got his desire back, with the help and support of Donna and his Giant teammates who visited him and lifted his spirits. Sometimes they wheeled him around the hospital hallways in his wheelchair.

"We're not giving up," Donna would tell him when he was low. "No crying, honey. We can't cry. We've got to fight."

On October 18, Kotar was transferred in a wheelchair from the Newark hospital to a hospital in Pittsburgh, to be closer to his family. Kotar has two children, Doug, Jr., 10, and Christie, 7. The children were told that their father wasn't feeling well, and were brought to see him.

He looked different to them. His hair had only begun to grow back after the loss during radiation treatments. And he was thinner, much thinner. Because of his inactivity and having been fed intravenously for a good length of time, he had lost nearly 50 pounds (his playing weight was 190—he stood 5 feet, 11 inches).

The kids also had been told that he could not talk because his vocal cords, made raw from the tubes that had been placed in him, needed rest.

At first, the kids were shy with him. Their father took some popcorn they had brought and playfully

tossed it at them, and they soon warmed up.

The visits from family and friends, the cards received from people and prayer groups throughout the country have given the Kotars continued hope.

Donna Kotar had not missed a day of visiting. Sometimes, at the end of an afternoon of visiting with his wife, and after he had had his exhausting chemotherapy, Doug Kotar would lie in bed, his eyes closed, unable to speak. Outside, because of the onset of winter, the early darkness would begin to draw into the room.

"I'd have to get back home to get the kids' dinner on the table," said Donna, "and so I'd talk to Doug to let him know I was leaving. I held his hand. Sometimes he didn't open his eyes, but he knew and he'd squeeze my hand.

"And I'd say to him, 'Goodbye. I love you. See you tomorrow.' "





Terry Bradshaw

When Terry Bradshaw joined the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1970, a 21-year-old kid out of Louisiana Tech University, he had a full head of hair and a full set of teeth.

Twelve years later, he has lost much of his hair and several of his teeth. The loss of hair is due to age and heredity, the teeth to his violent profession.

Bradshaw has been taking jarring blows and crunching tackles from the charging mastodons who perform on the defensive line of his opponents. He has also been rocked by a roller-coaster career that has seen him quarterback the Steelers to an unprecedented four Super Bowl championships in the 1970s, and yet throughout his career—down to last season—he was booed as much as cheered by the hometown fans, yanked by his coach for surprisingly poor performances, and, in his personal life, rocked by the breakup of two marriages.

This season was no stranger than most for Bradshaw. Many of the Steeler players that had com-

prised the great teams were gone, such as Joe Greene and L.C. Greenwood. But some remained, like Lynn Swann and Jack Lambert and Franco Harris, and, of course, Bradshaw. But there were 23 players who had never been on a playoff team, and had not been with the Steelers when they won their last Super Bowl in January 1980.

In 1981, the Steelers were only 8 and 8. Before the 1982 season began, Bradshaw said, "You have to have the attitude that, hey, the pressure's off. The great years are over. Now, everybody is starting over. The fans and the players know it. The coaches know it. The writers know it. Everybody knows we are making our move now."

"Now, everybody else, like Cincinnati, is supposed to win. We're young. I've said all along this is the best group of rookies I have ever been around. They are talented and they keep the old guys loose."

"Maybe we've got enough young blood to spur the old blood into making the right mixture."

It seemed that that's just what was happening. The Steelers, in the strike-shortened season, made it into the playoffs with a record of 6 wins and 3 losses.

At the beginning of the season, the Steelers beat Dallas and Cincinnati, two of the best teams in football. And Bradshaw, proving his arm hadn't aged as much as some had thought, was leading the team.

Behind all this, however, was the possibility of a strike by the National Football League Players Association. Players seemed to be thinking as much about the potential breach in the season as how to

run the X's and O's in the play book.

Bradshaw took a stand about the threatened strike. He said he would "lead the parade" of players across any picket line. "With the economy the way it is," he said, "people aren't going to be sympathetic with a guy making \$100,000 going on strike."

Bradshaw continued: "I just don't like strikes. Mature people ought to be able to sit down and work things out."

His stand was heavily criticized by union workers outside of football, as well as many in the Players Association.

Larry Williams, a pieceworker on the assembly line of the Westinghouse Air Brake Company in Pittsburgh, expressed the sentiments of many. "I'm a Terry Bradshaw fan," he said, "but leading the procession across the picket line? That's wrong. He'd be a strikebreaker, no matter how much he's making."

Bradshaw, in fact, was making \$300,000 a year. The strike threat was not so much for the big wage-earners like Bradshaw, but for the linemen, the less-than-glamorous players, who make considerably less—in a career that averages four years per professional.

"For the small man in an industry to make gains," said Dr. Mark McCulloch, professor of labor history at the University of Pittsburgh, "you have to have the big men go along. Bradshaw's a star veteran quarterback, and has more leverage than linemen or young players."

Bradshaw ultimately did not cross the picket line,

and sat out the 57-day strike with the rest of the 1,500 or so NFL players.

When the season was resumed, Bradshaw was ready, or thought he was.

The Steelers beat the Houston Oilers, 24-10, but Bradshaw had a poor outing, completing just 16 out of 40 passes and he had 6 deflected at the line of scrimmage. After a badly thrown ball was intercepted, Coach Chuck Noll turned to Bradshaw and said, "What have you been doing for the last seven weeks?"

Bradshaw chuckled. He believed that it was a matter of time before he'd get on the track again. But Noll was going to stay with him, just as he did in 1974, the year that Bradshaw said he "turned the corner" as a quarterback.

In the middle of that season, Noll gave him the starting job. Previously, he had had to share time with Terry Hanratty and Joe Gilliam.

"When I got the confidence from that man"—meaning Noll—"was when I became a quarterback, when I started making progress," said Bradshaw. "Prior to that, I wasn't making any progress. I knew that when I made mistakes, I was going to be benched, and I was. When he finally said, 'Go and make your mistakes, we're going to win with you' is when I became a real professional quarterback."

The Steelers went on to win the Super Bowl a few months later, in January 1975, and repeated in 1976, 1979, and 1980. All with Bradshaw at quarterback. He twice won the Most Valuable Player trophy of the Super Bowl—a distinction he shares

only with Bart Starr, the former Packer quarterback—and last year was voted to the NFL's Team of the Decade.

The Steelers, many of them stars, too, picked him as the team's MVP two years in a row.

Now he had helped get them into the 1982 play-offs. With dreams of a fifth Super Bowl ring, the Steelers met the San Diego Chargers in Pittsburgh on Sunday, January 9.

And Bradshaw was terrific, for three quarters.

Bradshaw, who already held the playoff record for touchdown passes, raised his total to 30 with a 2-yarder to Bennie Cunningham in the third quarter and a 14-yarder to John Stallworth at the start of the fourth.

The Steelers now led, 28–17. He had completed a remarkable 25 out of 28 passes, including 14 in a row at one stretch, and all 11 he tried in the third quarter.

The rest of the game, though, was a disaster.

"I missed everything," he said, of his last-period performance. "I just played a more conservative game. That's what you do when you're leading."

He hit on only 3 of 11, and he disdained the pass during one critical possession.

Meanwhile, the Chargers behind Dan Fouts were catching up. Fouts threw two touchdown passes to Kellen Winslow, the tight end, in the final quarter.

Bradshaw's most grievous error came when, with the Steelers ahead, 28–17, he threw across the field to Lynn Swann. But it was intercepted by cornerback Jeff Allen, who returned the ball to the Steeler

29. The Chargers scored shortly after.

"In the heat of battle," Bradshaw said afterward about his poor pass selection, "you do some stupid things."

The Steelers then tried to hold onto the ball but couldn't, and a poor punt gave the Chargers the ball on the Steeler 36-yard line with 3:59 to go in the game. After several plays, and the Chargers eating up the clock, Chuck Muncie ran over for a touchdown from the 13-yard line. San Diego now led, 31-28.

There was a minute to go in the game, but unlike previous years, Bradshaw couldn't get his team to make the needed comeback.

And Bradshaw, his helmet in his hand, with thinning blond hair and missing front teeth, trudged wearily off the field.

It had been a long game, a long season, a long career. But all, except for the career, was over.



Mike Pagel

The date was Monday, September 20, 1982, a date that Mike Pagel will not soon forget.

Pagel, the rookie starting quarterback for the Baltimore Colts, came into the team's training complex in a Baltimore suburb with a pain in his ankle, a crick in his neck, and a load on his mind.

The ankle problem was from having been hit by a Miami Dolphin defensive back during the Colts' 24-20 loss Sunday at Miami; the neck ache was from having slept uncomfortably on the plane home that was delayed three and a half hours because of engine troubles; and, finally, the uncertainty of the players' strike weighed heavily. It was early afternoon. The union's decision was scheduled to be announced in a few hours.

Pagel had dealt with physical injuries before, of course. A football player can hardly lay claim to the title unless some part of him is hung in a sling, or ought to be.



In fact, against New England in the first league game of the season, Pagel was accidentally kicked in the head by a defender. But he stayed in the game for three more plays and woozily but decisively led the Colts to a score, sneaking over personally for the touchdown.

Shortly after, he was diagnosed as having suffered a mild concussion.

But a strike was something else for Pagel. It meant he had to pack his bags and return to his home in Phoenix.

"It's very tough for me," he said. "I'm right in the middle of it."

Pagel was trying to earn a spot on the team. On the other hand, he wanted to do what was right as far as sticking with the players was concerned.

"The other guys and I are actually just starting to learn how this game is played up here," he said. "I'm just trying to make a place for myself."

He had been doing a fine job of it, in fact.

An outstanding quarterback at Arizona State the previous year, Pagel had expected to be drafted in the first or second round of the National Football League draft.

It didn't happen.

Instead, he was chosen in the fourth round by Baltimore. "By then, I was wondering if I was ever going to get drafted," he said. He wasn't even the first quarterback selected by the Colts. They had already picked Art Schlichter, the all-American from Ohio State, in the first round.

The Colts' quarterback spot was open because of

Snow job for Mike Pagel

the trade of Bert Jones to the Los Angeles Rams. And Pagel proceeded to surprise the scouts and beat out Schlichter, capping the competition by throwing three touchdown passes against Atlanta in an exhibition game.

Though the Colts lost their first two games of the season with Pagel at quarterback, they had shown promise under their new coach, Frank Kush, a promise that was completely lacking the season before.

The 1981 Colts won only 2 of 16 games, tying the New England Patriots for the worst record in professional football.

"This team needs to keep playing," said Pagel. "We're on the verge of playing very good football."

The Colts had perhaps the youngest team in the league, starting five rookies on offense and four rookies on defense.

"I'm just getting to where I'm comfortable with the offense," said Pagel. "For example, at first I'd call a pass play and I'd know for sure where my primary and secondary receivers were. Then I got a better idea of where three and four should be, but those other receivers are still a little hazy.

"I mean, if I sat down with a pencil and paper I could tell you where they're all supposed to be. But that's mechanical, and with experience it'll become habitual—you've only got a few seconds out there to get it right.

"I think what I'm experiencing is the same for the other young guys here—the more you play, the more you adjust. A few days' rest, however, wouldn't hurt," he said.

"I've been throwing in minicamps, in May and June, and then in training camp that began in July, and then on through the preseason and regular season. I've thrown more passes altogether than I would have in an entire college season. My arm's a little tired."

Because of the Colts' flight home from Miami on that Sunday, September 19, Kush had decided to call off practice. But the players still came for their physical treatments to salve ailments to bones and muscles.

Pagel arrived in casual clothes—a yellow sweatshirt, blue jeans, and sneakers. He is 6 feet, 2 inches tall and weighs 200 pounds. He has brown eyes, a decisive chin, and a sturdy build.

But he hobbled because of his painful ankle.

Coach Kush spotted him. Kush, widely known as a tough and implacable coach, said, "What are you limping for?"

Pagel had played for Kush at Arizona State for two years, and knew the sound in his voice. The steely voice and riveting blue eyes were nothing new for Pagel, but that didn't lessen the intimidating effect.

"Got a little banged up, is all," said Pagel. "But I'll be ready for the game on Sunday."

Kush said nothing as they parted, not even, "If there is a game on Sunday," because the players' union was scheduled to announce that afternoon whether a strike would be called.

It was. There would be no game on Sunday, and not again until eight Sundays later.

Pagel stuck around for a while, worked out with some of his teammates, then went home.

Fifty-seven days later, the strike was settled and a quick training camp was resumed.

When the Colts played their first game, it was a disaster. They lost to the New York Jets, 37-0.

"Pathetic," was the word Baltimore coach Kush used to describe the team's performance.

Yet Pagel had had a relatively good day. He passed for 230 yards, but the Colts had only two attempts to score, and failed in both.

Pagel was bruised and battered from the pounding by the Jets' noted New York Sack Exchange.

"We can do better," he said. "I know we're a young team—practically a college team compared to the experienced players on the Jets. But I know we will do better."

Two weeks later, they stunned the Bengals, the defending American Football League champions. The Bengals were 3 and 1 going into the game, the Colts 0 and 4.

The Colts enjoyed a 10-6 halftime lead on Pagel's 17-yard touchdown pass to Ray Butler and Mike Wood's 33-yard field goal.

But the second half was a different story.

The Bengals came back with Pete Johnson scoring on a 6-yard run and Ken Anderson firing two TD passes to M. L. Harris, and they took a 20-10 lead with 14:46 left in the game.

Now Baltimore moved. With 6:37 left in the last quarter, Pagel found Pat Beach for a 4-yard touchdown pass.

The Bengals couldn't score, and the Colts got the ball back with a chance to beat the team that had gone to the Super Bowl the season before.

Pagel's 23-yard pass to Holden Smith set up Wood's field-goal try with 10 seconds left in the game. He was kicking from 40 yards out.

He laid into it, but it sailed wide of the mark, and the young Colts went down to defeat, 20-17.

But their performance and Pagel's was encouraging. Two weeks later, they would tie the Packers, 20-20 in overtime. The Packers would go on to make the National Football Conference playoffs.

In the Packer game, Baltimore had overcome a 20-6 deficit in the fourth quarter to send the game into overtime, with Pagel throwing two touchdowns.

The Colts ended the season with no wins, eight losses, and a tie.

Young Pagel had distinguished himself, however. Though he was ranked 11th of 16 quarterbacks in the final statistics, he was ahead of such veterans as Jim Zorn of Seattle, Archie Manning of Houston, and Brian Sipe of Cleveland.

For the guy who seemed overlooked in the college draft, he could now look ahead to a very bright future.

**“
RAMBLING TO
PAY DIRT**



NFC Championship

Washington 31, Dallas 17
RFK Stadium, Washington, D.C.
Saturday, January 22, 1983

Washington hadn't quite completed the wiping up of Minnesota in the playoff game at RFK Stadium in D.C., on Saturday, January 15, 1983, when a chant began in the stands and swept through the crowd of 54,593: "We Want Dallas! We Want Dallas!"

The crowd was referring to the next Sunday's NFC title game in the same stadium, which would match the Redskins against either the Dallas Cowboys or the Green Bay Packers. The Cowboys and Packers were playing tomorrow, that is, January 16. Not only did the Redskin fans want Dallas to win, the Redskin players did, too.

"We want respect, and to get it, I guess we have to beat Dallas first," said Redskin defensive end Dexter Manley after the 'Skins had whipped the Vikings, 21-7. "We have to beat America's Team." That's what Dallas is often called. "I respect them, but I just dislike them. And they're the only team to beat us this year."

The Redskins had the best record in football, having won 10 of 11 games up to that point in the season. No team could match the Redskins' numbers: 6 straight wins, 13 wins in their last 14 games, 18 wins in their last 22.

The Redskins last beat the Cowboys in 1979, but since had lost six straight to them, including three in a row under Coach Joe Gibbs. The last defeat, 24-10, on December 5, 1982, was controlled by the Cowboys, who sacked quarterback Joe Theismann seven times through a variety of all-out blitzes.

The Cowboys also were the only elite NFL team the Redskins played this season, one reason Washington's true ability was still being questioned. The players knew this, and as Theismann put it, "The only way we will get respect is to keep winning—but how nice if it were Dallas."

It was. Dallas would beat the Packers, 37-26.

January 22, the day of the game in RFK Stadium, was mild and dry and sunny.

The Redskins, a mixed collection of veterans, rookies, and free agents assembled into a formidable team over the last two seasons, were ready.

So, too, were the Cowboys, the vaunted "computerized machine"—nationally popular because of its winning ways since the 1960s, their original and widely imitated Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders, and their colorful characters—from Don Meredith, Duane Thomas, and Hollywood Henderson to today's bunch, which includes quarterback Danny White and running back Tony Dorsett.

The Cowboys had something to prove them-

selves. They had lost the NFC championship game two years in a row—to Philadelphia in 1981 and to San Francisco in 1982. They were on the verge of inheriting the soiled mantle of “Next Year’s Champions,” the embarrassing title that they played under in the late ’60s when they failed to win pressure games.

And once again, they would go down in a big game.

The Redskins battered, bruised, and finally broke the Cowboys to win the game, the NFC title, and a trip to the Super Bowl in Pasadena, California, the following week.

Washington scored 10 points in the fourth quarter, 10 points that made the final score 31–17, and there was no Dallas comeback—unlike the days when Roger Staubach, for example, was turning games around by throwing two TD passes in the waning minutes.

“It was strictly a Redskins’ day,” said Dallas coach Tom Landry.

And the American Express commercial that he did during the players’ strike proved prophetic. In the commercial, he is dressed as a cowboy, ties his horse to a hitching post, and enters a saloon, where he is surrounded by four Redskins—not American Indians, but football players in full war regalia: helmets, shoulder pads, maroon jerseys.

The Cowboys—all of them—seemed surrounded by the Redskins—all of them—that afternoon in RFK Stadium.

Dallas went ahead on a field goal, but when the



Redskins took over the ball, they were immediately convincing.

Riggins, the sturdy fullback, hit through the middle of the Dallas defense for 7 yards, and would gain 133 more before the game was over.

Riggins's opening salvo was the first play of nine on an opening drive of 84 yards that set the tone for the game.

"I thought that opening drive was the big drive," said Joe Gibbs. Indeed, the Redskins' offensive line—known affectionately as "The Hogs," because of the hard and dirty work they do (dirty as in unglamorous, not illegal)—pushed the Dallas defense back continually.

The Redskins scored their first touchdown on a 19-yard pass from Theismann to Charlie Brown, the wide receiver.

The Redskin defense also did a job—in fact, it knocked Danny White out of the game near the end of the first half, which ended with Washington ahead, 14–3. White suffered a concussion when he was hit by Dexter Manley and he did not play again.

Manley had another big play. He tipped a pass thrown by Gary Hogeboom, White's successor, in the fourth quarter, a screen pass intended for Tony Dorsett. The ball was tipped into the air and was caught by Darryl Grant, the Redskins' defensive tackle, at the Dallas 10. From there, Grant ran to the end zone for Washington's fourth and final touchdown. Less than seven minutes remained in the game.

That TD changed the outlook. The Cowboys were

Moseley boots a field goal.

14 points behind rather than 7. The game was all but over, and then Riggins put the finishing touches to it.

In the last five minutes, the Redskins had the ball and gave it to Riggins on 9 of their final 10 plays, making four first downs. He would finish the day with two TD runs, as well.

Dallas made it close in the third period, when Drew Pearson caught a 6-yard pass from Hogeboom. And the extra point made it 14-10 in favor of Washington. But less than two minutes later, the Redskins scored again. A 76-yard kickoff return by Mike Nelms brought the ball to the Dallas 20. Five plays later, Washington scored on a 4-yard run. By Riggins. Who else?

Cowboy-Redskin Summary

Scoring

FIRST QUARTER

Dallas—FG Septien 27. Drive: 75 yards, 14 plays. Key play: Pearson 14 pass from D. White. Time left: 7:15. Dallas 3, Washington 0.

Washington—C. Brown 19 pass from Theismann (Moseley kick). Drive: 84 yards, 9 plays. Key plays: Riggins 17 run, Warren 15 pass from Theismann. Time left: 1:55. Washington 7, Dallas 3.

SECOND QUARTER

Washington—Riggins 1 run (Moseley kick). Drive: 11 yards, 4 plays. Key play: Coleman recovery of Washington punt fumbled by R. Hill at Dallas 11. Washington 14, Dallas 3.

THIRD QUARTER

Dallas—Pearson 6 pass from Hogeboom (Septien kick). Drive: 38 yards, 6 plays. Key play: Hogeboom 15 pass to Johnson. Time left: 11:29. Washington 14, Dallas 10.

Washington—Riggins 4 run (Moseley kick). Drive: 20 yards, 5 plays. Key plays: Nelms 76 kick-off return, C. Brown 22 pass from Theismann on 3rd-and-18. Time left: 9:11. Washington 21, Dallas 10.

Dallas—Johnson 23 pass from Hogeboom (Septien kick). Drive: 84 yards, 14 plays. Key plays: Dorsett 17 run, T. Hill 10 pass from Hogeboom on 3rd-and-10. Time left: 3:25. Washington 21, Dallas 17.

FOURTH QUARTER

Washington—FG Moseley 29. Drive: 28 yards, 7 plays. Key play: Kaufman interception of Hogeboom's pass intended for T. Hill. Time left: 7:12. Washington 24, Dallas 17.

Washington—Grant 10 interception return (Moseley kick). Key play: Manley tipped Hogeboom's pass, allowing Grant interception. Time left: 6:55. Washington 31, Dallas 17.

Statistics

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|----|-------|
| Dallas | 3 | 0 | 14 | 0-17 |
| Washington.... | 7 | 7 | 7 | 10-31 |

| | Dallas | Wash |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| First downs | 21 | 18 |
| Rushes-yards | 21-65 | 41-37 |
| Passing yards | 275 | 123 |
| Return yards..... | 104 | 154 |
| Passes | 23-44-2 | 12-20-0 |
| Sacks By | 3-27 | 0-0 |
| Punts | 3-31 | 5-40 |
| Fumbles-lost | 2-1 | 1-0 |
| Penalties-yards ... | 3-15 | 3-25 |
| Time of Possession | 27:22 | 32:38 |

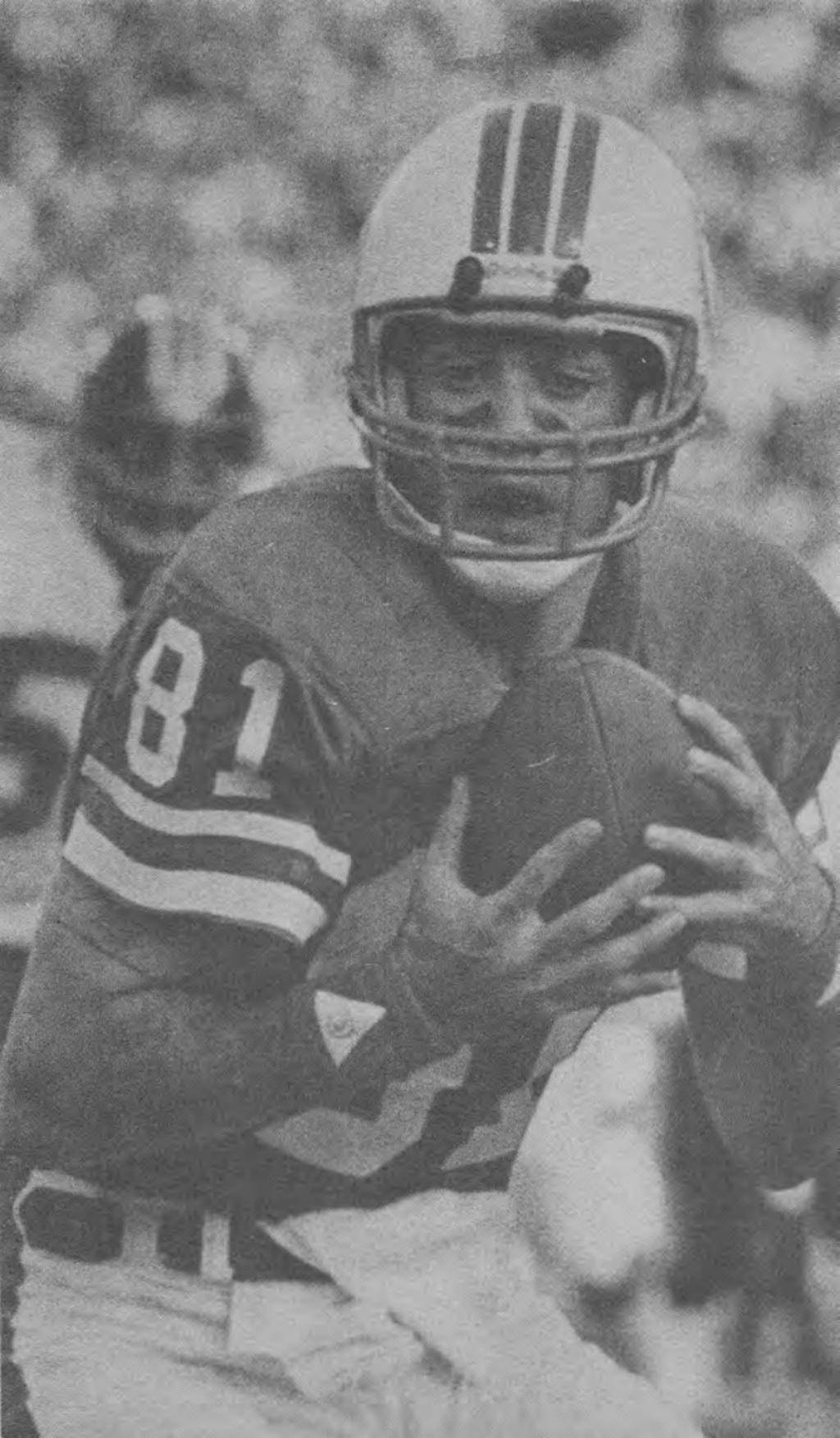
RUSHING—Dallas, Dorsett 15-57, Springs 4-15, T. Hill 1-minus 6, Pearson 1-minus 1. Washington, Riggins 36-140, Washington 2-2, Garrett 1-minus 2, Theismann 1-minus 3.

PASSING—Dallas, D. White 9-15-0-113, Hogeboom 14-29-2-162. Washington, Theismann 12-20-0-150.

RECEIVING—Dallas, T. Hill 5-59, Dorsett 2-29, Pearson 5-55, Johnson 5-73, Newsome 3-24, Cosbie 2-26, DuPree 1-9, Washington, Brown 3-54, Warren 2-24, Garrett 4-46, Washington 1-13, Walker 1-9, Harmon 1-4.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—Dallas, Septien 42. Washington, Moseley 27.

Attendance—55,045



AFC Championship

Miami 14, New York Jets 0

Orange Bowl, Miami
Sunday, January 23, 1983

Perhaps it should be known as the Mud Bowl. The American Football Conference championship, played on Sunday, January 23, 1983, in the Orange Bowl in Miami, Florida, was one of the dirtiest games ever played. Not in penalties, to be sure, but in running and passing and assorted other football particulars. It had rained for three days before the game and all day Sunday during the game. The players were covered with mud, and footing for the most part was no better than in a pigsty.

In the end, the Dolphins had fewer problems with the elements than did the Jets, and won, 14-0, giving them the right to advance to the Super Bowl the following Sunday.

The Jets could generate only 139 total offensive yards, while Miami did just a bit better, 198 yards gained by rushing and passing.

The big plays for the Dolphins were interceptions—five of them. One led to a touchdown and another went for a touchdown, for the only two

scoring plays of the soggy afternoon.

To try to cope with the field for better traction, the Jets' equipment manager, Bill Hampton, produced three-quarter-inch cleats instead of the normal half-inches the Jets had expected to wear.

The middle of the field was so bare of turf that the half-time show was canceled at the request of Al Ward, assistant to the president of the American Football Conference.

Before the game, puddles had formed over the center of the field, from goal line to goal line.

Because the natural grass field, known as Prescription Athletic Turf, normally presents no drainage problems, it does not have a crown at the center for water to drain off. And the Dolphins do not own a tarpaulin, which could have kept the field dry during the three days it rained.

There are pumps underneath the field. But, as Ward put it during the game, "It's coming down faster than they can pump it out."

By the end of the first quarter, however, the puddles had disappeared, leaving a muddy surface.

"As a coach, I'd like ideal conditions," said Walt Michaels, coach of the Jets. "However, the game of football wasn't made to be played in ideal conditions. It's played in all kinds of weather."

Why the field wasn't covered was a mystery to some. But, an even bigger mystery, as pointed out by Paul Zimmerman in *Sports Illustrated*, was: How were the Miami Dolphins able to double- and triple-cover all the New York Jets' pass receivers and still have enough people left to rush the quarterback and

stop the run? "O.K., O.K.," wrote Zimmerman, "so maybe they didn't double-cover *all* the receivers, just most of them, the ones they were worried about."

One of those receivers was Wesley Walker, the Jets' star pass-catcher. In ten previous games against the Dolphins over five years, Walker had caught 42 passes for 785 yards and nine touchdowns. In the AFC championship game, he caught 1 pass, for no gain.

"The conditions didn't help," Walker said after the game, "but on a slippery field the pass receiver is supposed to have the advantage over the defensive backs."

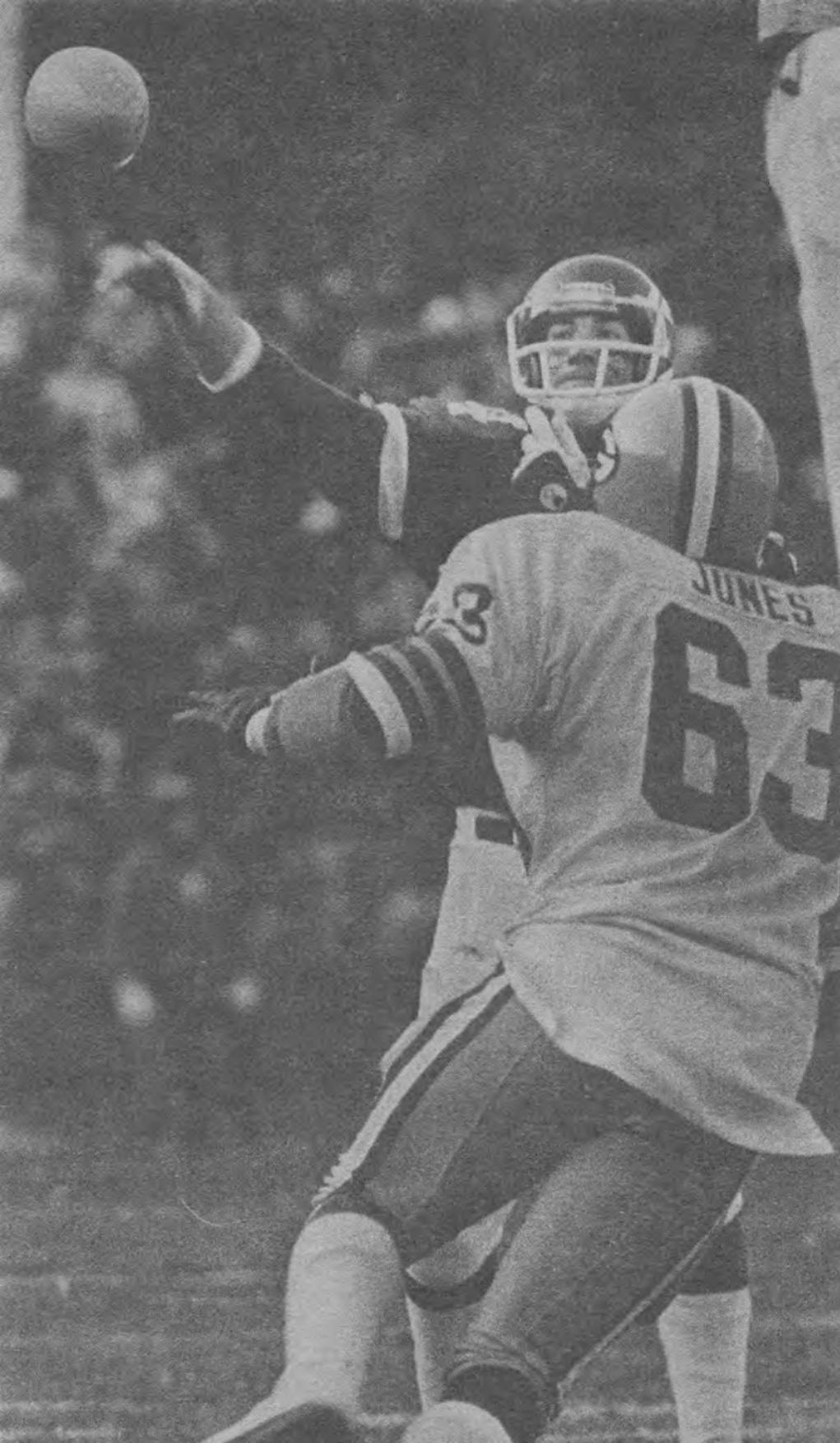
But the defensive strategy devised by Miami assistant coach Bill Arnsparger proved devastating—as least as tough for the Jets to handle as the weather and field conditions.

Of the five interceptions, three were by A. J. Duhe, a linebacker. In the third period, a Duhe interception of a pass by Jets' quarterback Richard Todd started a 48-yard drive that ended when Woody Bennett—whom the Jets cut in 1980—drove over the middle for a 7-yard touchdown run.

In the end zone, he turned to the fans and made a bow. He was happy to have scored a touchdown—especially against his old team. "I was up for it—I could hardly sleep the last couple of nights," he said afterward.

In the fourth quarter, Duhe picked off a Todd pass at the 35-yard line and ran it in for the second and final touchdown of the game.

Both times, Uwe von Schamann, the West Ger-



man-born place-kicker, who broke a small bone in his lower back in a playoff game the previous week, kicked the extra point.

That was the game, as simple as that.

Otherwise, the defenses of both teams prevailed.

Other than the disastrous day Todd had—he had 15 completions in 37 tries for only 76 yards—and the nonday Walker had, the worst Jet offensive performance was by Freeman McNeil. McNeil had led all rushers in the 1982 season with 786 yards for a 5.2 average. His style is to slither, to cut back. With that style, he accounted for 202 yards in the Jets' first playoff game against Cincinnati, and another 101 against the Raiders the week before.

Against the Dolphins in the title game, he was held to his season's low rushing total—46 yards on 17 carries.

After the game, several Jets were distraught and refused to speak to newsmen. It was pointed out by those reporters that after victories those same players were positively gabby.

"I expected more from those young men who were so polite when winning," wrote Dick Young, in the *New York Post*. "Now they lose a game and act like it's the end of the world. . . .

"Look at the men lined up at shelters, seeking a bowl of hot soup. You think you have troubles? Look at the guys in wheelchairs who wish they could lose a football game, and talk about it.

"And then there are the Jets who realize how well off they are, who are grown up enough to know that losing a football game doesn't give them license

Richard Todd sees a man clear.

to be rude. There are the Chuck Ramseys and the Jerome Barkums and Mark Gastineaus, and the rest who, thank heaven, form the large majority of the team."

Jets-Dolphins Summary

Scoring

THIRD QUARTER

Dolphins 7, Jets 0—Bennett, 7, run (Von Schamann, kick) at 2:05. 48 yards in seven plays. Key plays: Duhe interception of Todd's deflected pass; Harris, 14, pass from Woodley on third-and-3, followed by penalty to Ray putting ball on Jets' 7.

FOURTH QUARTER

Dolphins 14, Jets 0—Duhe, 35-yard interception return of Todd's pass (Von Schamann, kick) at 2:08.

Statistics

DOLPHINS 14, JETS 0

| | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|------|
| Jets..... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0-0 |
| Miami..... | 0 | 0 | 7 | 7-14 |

| | Jets | Mia. |
|--------------------|---------|--------|
| First downs | 10 | 13 |
| Rushes-yards ... | 24-62 | 41-138 |
| Passing yards ... | 77 | 60 |
| Return yards | 66 | 68 |
| Passes | 15-37-5 | 9-21-3 |
| Sacks By | 4-27 | 4-26 |
| Punts | 10-36 | 10-33 |
| Fumbles-lost | 1-0 | 3-1 |
| Penalties-yards .. | 6-42 | 3-15 |
| Time of Possession | 26:09 | 33:51 |

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Jets, McNeil 17-46, Todd 4-10, Augustiniak 2-5, Dierking 1-1. Miami, Woodley 8-46, Franklin 13-44, Nathan 7-24, Bennett 13-24.

PASSING—Jets, Todd 15-37-5-103. Miami, Woodley 9-21-3-87.

RECEIVING—Jets, Harper 4-14, J. Jones 3-35, Barkum 2-20, Augustiniak 2-12, McNeil 1-9, Gaffney 1-7, Dierking 1-6, Walker 1-0. Miami, Vigorito 3-29, Harris 2-28, Nathan 2-4, Rose 1-20, Lee 1-6.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

Attendance—67,396.

Super Bowl Review

The week of the 17th Super Bowl—which was played on Sunday afternoon, January 30, 1983, in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California—seemed a long, long time in coming.

There had never been a season quite like the 1982 season, and most football fans and participants hoped there would never be another like it.

When Pete Rozelle, commissioner of the National Football League, stood at the lectern in the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Hotel in Los Angeles on the Friday afternoon before the game, he addressed a roomful of reporters, print and electronic alike, on the many problems the league had and is facing.

As commissioner of the National Football League for the last 23 years, Rozelle has been its most visible and widely traveled spokesman. A tall, well-dressed man with a thinning hairline and an easy smile, he has been the league's symbol of integrity, honesty,



and prosperity. Some say he has been its conscience, and, above all, the embodiment of its carefully constructed and neatly maintained image.

An image that, in the view of some, had been badly tarnished in 1982 because of an eight-week players' strike in the middle of the season, new gambling implications, headlined drug scandals, the charges on a Public Broadcasting System television show that a former owner (Carroll Rosenbloom of the Rams) had been murdered, continuing antitrust legislation against it, and overt and unnecessarily violent play.

That's enough to make anyone take a deep breath. And Rozelle did.

"All we are is escapism," said Rozelle. "I wish we'd be able to stay off the labor pages and the news pages and stay on the sports pages. It's a turn-off to fans to be reading about all this stuff that's not football. Look, some people like the ballet, some like the opera, and some like football. Let them enjoy it."

But it's not so easy. "Everyone who runs a business would love for people to think it's purely escapism," countered Ed Garvey, executive director of the NFL Players Association. "In that way, if a labor dispute arises you just say it's interfering with our escapism."

The strike, called by the players after the second regular-season game, in October, lasted until December. It was perhaps the single most trying moment in league history. There had been a strike in

1974, but that was in the exhibition season. Never had a regular season been disrupted like this.

The issues were complex, the negotiations prolix, but it all boiled down to quotient X: money.

The players wanted much more in base wages, in future television contracts, in severance pay. The owners were willing to toss them just a little more—the owners offered to increase the pot by millions, to be sure, but it's only a *little* more in relation to the billions of dollars that the NFL is expecting to take in over the next several years.

The representatives of the Players Association sat across a table from the representatives of the Management Council. At one point during these long negotiations that were often hotly argued, Garvey leaned across the table and stuck out his jaw, as did his opposite number, Vince Lombardi (son of the late coach).

It's not certain how it began—perhaps Lombardi baited Garvey, or vice versa—but bodily threats were implied by Lombardi.

The president of the players' union, Gene Upshaw, the Raiders' 6-foot, 5-inch, 255-pound offensive lineman, coughed.

"Hey, Vince," said Upshaw, "if you're looking for action, here it is."

Nothing else happened.

Later, Garvey recalled that moment.

"If Lombardi ever hit Upshaw," he said, "and Upshaw found out about it—Vince would be in a lot of trouble."

Eventually, the two sides came together, and the

season was resumed. However, the 16-game schedule was cancelled in order to make the Super Bowl date (plans such as hotel and plane reservations could not have been adequately altered), and a 9-game schedule was instituted. Then, a one-of-a-kind playoff system was devised because of the inequities of a short season. Sixteen teams (eight from each conference) would be chosen by record as opposed to conference leaders as in the past.

It was called the Super Bowl Tournament, with a round of 16—conference quarterfinals, regional semifinals, then the conference playoffs.

And finally the Super Bowl, which featured the Washington Redskins versus the Miami Dolphins. Maybe all the trouble was worth it because the game they played was one of the best in Super Bowl history, and was compared to the most memorable championship game—Super Bowl III, in 1969. That was when the New York Jets, 20-point underdogs from the young American Football Conference, beat the Baltimore Colts, the NFC champs. And it was the game that established Jet quarterback Joe Namath—who brashly predicted victory and “guaranteed” it—as a folk hero in America.

For all Namath’s talk, his mink coat, Fu Manchu mustache, and his reputation as a night-lifer—“Broadway Joe” had owned a bar-restaurant in Manhattan but would divest himself of it because of “unsavory influences” that frequented the place, supposedly without Namath’s knowledge—Namath proved he was one of the great passers and field leaders in NFL history.

The first two Super Bowls were remarkable only because the drama that was anticipated did not materialize. The American Football League and the National Football League had merged in 1965 and the first championship game between them was held in 1967.

It was held in the Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles, and was less than a thrilling success. In a stadium that holds 100,000, there were 30,000 empty seats. The powerful Green Bay Packers beat the Kansas City Chiefs, 35-10, and then, under coach Lombardi, repeated as champions the next year in Miami, with a 33-14 win over the Oakland Raiders.

Lombardi retired, and the Packers, with such stars as Paul Hornung, Bart Starr, Jim Taylor, Willie Wood, and Donny Anderson, were passing their peak as a unit. It would be their last visit to the Super Bowl.

Many football observers believed the American Conference could not match up to the National Conference. Namath and the Jets in the following year changed their tune.

Super Bowl IV saw the Kansas City Chiefs return to the title game, and this time they defeated the Minnesota Vikings and their famed defensive line, "The Purple People Eaters."

The Chiefs, 13-point underdogs, became the second straight AFC team to win the Super Bowl.

Super Bowl V wasn't settled until the last five seconds of the game, when Jim O'Brien kicked a 32-yard field goal to give the Colts a 16-13 win over the Cowboys. In a way, it redeemed the Colts from their loss to the Jets in Super Bowl III.

The following year, Dallas redeemed itself. The Cowboys were back in Super Bowl VI and their tremendous defense stopped the Dolphins' offense—particularly quarterback Bob Griese and full-back Larry Csonka—to win 24–3.

The Dolphins flip-flopped to the victory side the following year, whipping the Redskins' "Over-the-Hill Gang"—so named because of the numerous oldsters on the team. The Dolphins won, 14–7, and completed a perfect season—17–0—a pro football record that still stands.

The Dolphins, under coach Don Shula, returned for an unprecedented third straight year, in Super Bowl VIII. The Viking offense, led by scrambler Fran Tarkenton, was thought to be explosive. Instead, it fizzled, and with Csonka carrying for a record 145 yards, the Dolphins won easily, 24–7.

In Super Bowl IX, the Steelers were the sentimental favorites over the returning Vikings. The Steelers' white-haired, cigar-chomping owner, Art Rooney, had been the head of the team for 42 years (this was in January 1975) and had never had a championship team.

The Steelers didn't disappoint him. With stars that included Franco Harris, the running back, Terry Bradshaw, the quarterback, and Lynn Swann, wide receiver, they beat the Vikes, 16–6.

In Super Bowl X in Miami, it was two familiar teams again, the Steelers and the Cowboys. The drama of the game was centered around Lynn Swann. He had suffered a concussion after a hard hit on a pass reception in the AFC title game two weeks before. But now he made four great catches

for 164 yards and a 64-yard TD. But the Cowboys nearly pulled it out at the end. With Dallas losing 21-17 and driving near the goal line, Staubach threw a pass in the end zone that was intercepted by Glen Edwards.

The Raiders humiliated the Vikings in a blowout, 32-14, in Super Bowl XI. It was the Vikings' fourth Super Bowl appearance and fourth straight loss. Fred Biletnikoff, with four outstanding catches for 79 yards, was named the game's Most Valuable Player.

In Super Bowl XII, Denver made it for the first time. Because of the color of their uniforms, they were called "The Orange Crush." Unfortunately for them, the Dallas Cowboys turned the tables, and "crushed" them, 27-10. Usually the MVP goes to a quarterback, running back, or some other offensive threat. This time it was shared by the Cowboys' defensive stars, linemen Harvey Martin and Randy White.

The Cowboys and the Steelers were back in Super Bowl XIII. The Cowboys, behind 35-17 in the last period, made a valiant comeback, but fell short in the last 22 seconds. The Steelers won 35-31, and became the first team ever to win three Super Bowls.

Terry Bradshaw, who threw four touchdown passes, was named MVP. "He throws a football 20 yards like I throw a dart 15 feet," said Cowboy safety Charlie Waters in admiration.

The Steelers, incredibly, made it four Super Bowl wins in the following year. They beat the Rams and their "cover-boy" quarterback, dark-haired Vince Ferragamo. The Rams made it a surprisingly close game, and after three quarters, the Steelers were

losing, 19–17. But then Bradshaw threw a TD pass to John Stallworth, and Franco Harris added another touchdown on a 1-yard plunge and it was Pittsburgh a 31–19 winner.

Super Bowl XV was the last chapter—for that season—in the Cinderella story of Jim Plunkett, Raider quarterback. The cast-off quarterback with blind parents engineered Oakland's 27–10 win over Philadelphia. His three TD passes earned him MVP honors.

In cold Pontiac, Michigan, but inside the temperate Silverdome stadium, Super Bowl XVI was played, with San Francisco beating Cincinnati 26–21. Joe Montana, the 49er quarterback, won MVP honors by hitting on 14 of 22 passes. After the game, President Reagan, following custom, called the winning coach, Bill Walsh.

In the press conference the following day, Walsh was asked if the president shouldn't have called the Cincinnati coach, Forrest Gregg, too, since both teams were the best in their respective conferences and put on such a splendid show. Walsh replied: "That's a good point, darned good point. It would have been nice if the president had called Forrest."

After Super Bowl XVII, President Reagan called to congratulate Joe Gibbs, coach of the winning Redskins. And then he called Don Shula of the Dolphins to offer praise for the effort. Winning, the president seemed to indicate, was important, but it's not everything.

SUPER BOWL SUMMARY

- 1967 at Los Angeles, Green Bay 35, Kansas City 10
1968 at Miami, Green Bay 33, Oakland 14
1969 at Miami, New York Jets 16, Baltimore 7
1970 at New Orleans, Kansas City 23, Minnesota 7
1971 at Miami, Baltimore 16, Dallas 13
1972 at New Orleans, Dallas 24, Miami 3
1973 at Los Angeles, Miami 14, Washington 7
1974 at Houston, Miami 24, Minnesota 7
1975 at New Orleans, Pittsburgh 16, Minnesota 6
1976 at Miami, Pittsburgh 21, Dallas 17
1977 at Pasadena, Oakland 32, Minnesota 14
1978 at New Orleans, Dallas 27, Denver 10
1979 at Miami, Pittsburgh 35, Dallas 31
1980 at Pasadena, Pittsburgh 31, Los Angeles 19
1981 at New Orleans, Oakland 27, Philadelphia 10
1982 at Pontiac, San Francisco 26, Cincinnati 21
1983 at Pasadena, Washington 27, Miami 17.

Super Bowl XVII

Washington 27, Miami 17
Rose Bowl, Pasadena
Sunday, January 30, 1983

First—because of the 57-day players' strike in 1982—there was a question of whether there would be a Super Bowl played in California. When that was resolved, the next question was, will there be a California?

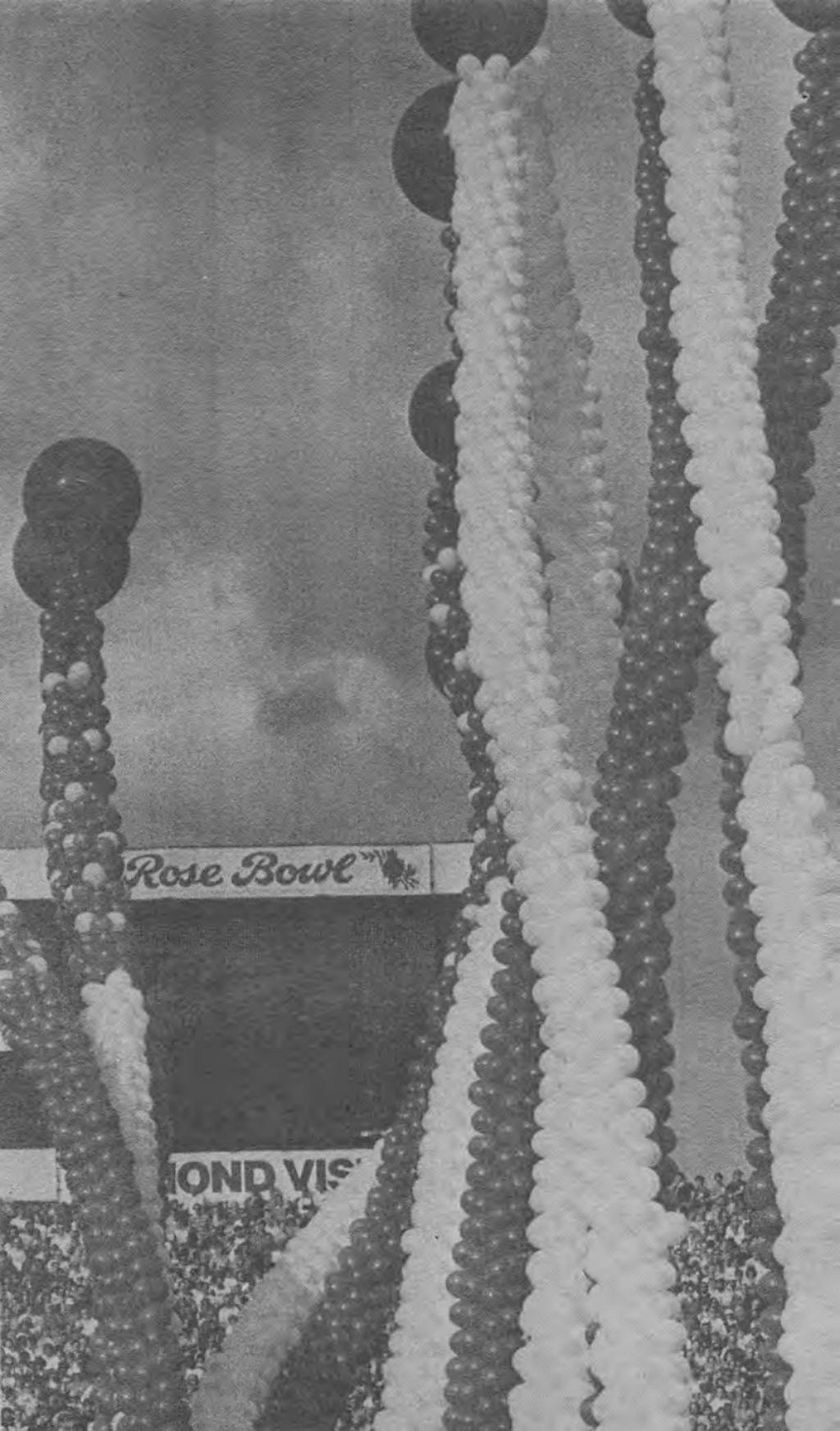
Super Bowl XVII, between the Washington Redskins and the Miami Dolphins, was scheduled for January 30, 1983, in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

An estimated 105,000 fans were due to watch the game in the huge old stadium, and another 100 million or so were to see it on television.

But—

Rare winter storms hit California in the days preceding the game, doing millions of dollars worth of damage.

Beachside houses slid into the sea, and restaurants built on piers that jutted into the ocean were swept away. One man in Malibu complained that his street had disappeared overnight during one of the storms.



Rose Bowl

OND VIS

On Friday morning, just two days before the Super Bowl, a minor earthquake shook the Malibu region, along the coast just north of Los Angeles.

Along the slopes of La Cienega Boulevard, miles from the sea, nature was frisky with Super Bowl visitors. Each time it rained, the water rushed down from the canyons, off the slope of Sunset Boulevard, and created instant creeks. Farther along the coast, there were mud slides.

Meanwhile, the two teams had moved indoors to work out.

Come Hades or high water, there was going to be a game.

And a game there was, possibly the best one of the 17 Super Bowls played.

And, lo and behold, the day of the game dawned bright and sunny.

The Dolphins were favored by about three points. The early figuring was that the Dolphins and their head coach, Don Shula, had been in three previous Super Bowls, while the Redskins had been in only one—and their coach, Joe Gibbs, was in it for the first time.

Besides that, the Dolphins' defense was considered the stingiest in football, and people still weren't quite sure how good the Redskins were.

Sure, John Riggins was an outstanding running back—but he could be erratic. Sure, Joe Theismann was a superb quarterback, but he had never been exposed to this kind of pressure.

Well, came the retort, David Woodley, quarterback for the Dolphins, was only in his first year as

a full-time starter. And the Dolphins' running game, leading with Tony Nathan, was good but not necessarily great.

And so it went down the line—literally and figuratively: the defensive line, the offensive line, the linebackers, and so forth.

A curious sidenote to the game was that these two teams played in the Super Bowl once before, in 1973, and at the same site.

The Dolphins won that one, 14–7. That was the game famous for Garo Yepremian's misplayed field-goal attempt. A muff by the ball-holder resulted in Yepremian, a bald Cypriot who had been a soccer star, picking up the football and trying to pass it. It slipped out of his hands and into the arms of the Redskins' Mike Bass, who raced 49 yards for the score.

It didn't take long for the Dolphins to make it seem that they would repeat the victory.

The American Conference champions moved decisively on their second possession.

On a second-and-6 on his 24, Woodley lofted a pass to wide receiver Jimmy Cefalo, who hauled in the ball and sprinted the last 55 yards to complete the 76-yard touchdown play.

"It was a quick hitch to the flanker, but their safety rotated into a zone and Woodley read it perfectly," explained Cefalo. Follow that? That's football talk for: the quarterback was supposed to throw a little pass to one player, and the defensive player moved to protect against it, and the quarterback then saw that another player was clear. Uwe von Schamann booted the extra point. 7–0 Miami.

Near the end of the first quarter, Dexter Manley tackled Woodley and caused a fumble. Redskins recovered on the Miami 46 and began to move as the quarter ended.

On the second play of the second quarter, Mark Moseley kicked a 31-yard field goal to put the Redskins on the scoreboard: Miami 7, Washington 3.

There were six minutes left in the half when the Dolphins kicked a field goal and it was 10-3.

Then the Redskins made a long downfield march, 80 yards on 11 carries before Alvin Garrett scored on a 4-yard pass from Theismann.

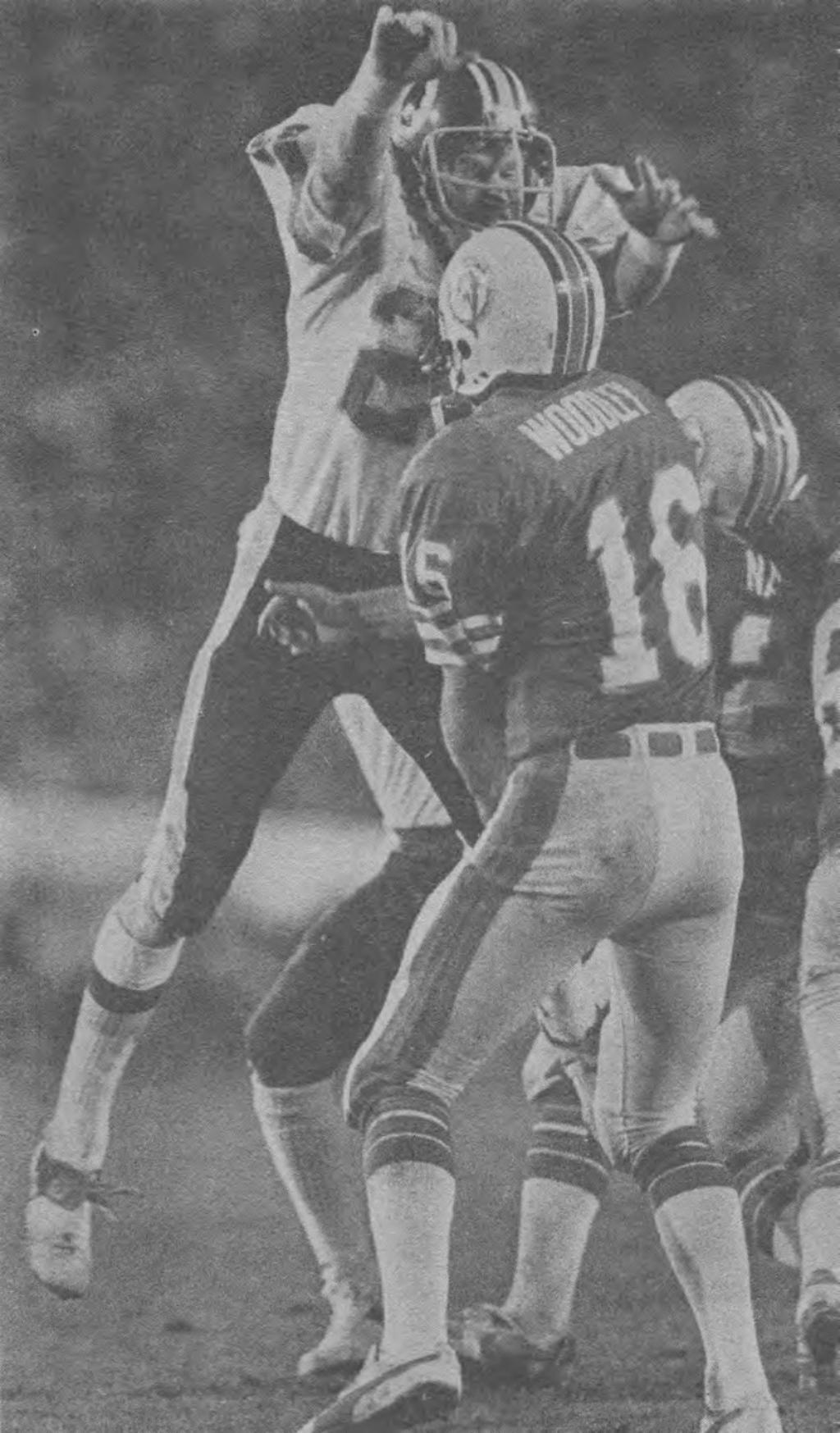
Garrett is one of several players or units on the Redskins with nicknames. He is called "The Smurf," because he is a tricky little guy who stands just 5-7. The 'Skins offensive line calls itself the Hogs. Because, they say, they do a lot of the dirty work, and are happy with it. There is another group of Redskins who call themselves the Fun Bunch and jump for joy in a circle when the 'Skins score.

The Dolphins have a defensive unit known as the Killer B's. That's the only group nickname, and so Miami is outnumbered by Washington in that regard. The Killer B's are so named because several of the defensemen have last names beginning with the letter *B*.

So much for nicknames. Back to the game.

After the Redskins scored, it looked like the half would end with a 10-10 score.

That is, it looked that way to everyone except Fulton Walker. That's his real name—no nickname. Anyway, Walker is the Dolphins' kickoff-return specialist, a second-year speedster out of West Virginia.



In college, he had returned punts for TD runs of 88, 85, and 77 yards in his days with the Mountaineers.

Walker pulled in Jeff Hayes's kickoff now on his 2-yard line and before the Redskins knew what hit them, fleet Fulton was on his way.

He zipped, zagged, and sped right through the 11 Redskin defenders, and raced 98 yards for a touchdown. It was a Super Bowl record for a kickoff return, eclipsing Rick Upchurch's 67-yard runback for Denver against Dallas in 1978. It was also the first kickoff return for a score in Super Bowl history. Miami led, 17-10.

Now, it seemed that the half would just slip away quietly. It almost did.

But 1:38 still remained, time enough for Theismann to mount a quick offensive. There was a pass-interference penalty called against Lyle Blackwood, one of two Blackwood brothers in the Miami secondary who are known as "The Bruise Brothers." That penalty aided a Washington drive.

The Redskins moved to a first-and-10 at the Miami 16. With 14 seconds and no timeouts remaining, a field-goal attempt or a low-risk pass into the end zone appeared in order.

But Theismann made a mistake that he would kick himself for at halftime in the locker room.

He selected a pass pattern that carried Garrett to the 7, where he was tackled by Glenn Blackwood, Lyle's brother, as time expired.

If Theismann had thrown the ball out of bounds, or to a receiver who stepped out of bounds, that

David Woodley meets the opposition.

would have stopped the clock and given the Redskins a perfect chance for a field goal.

But things would be looking up in the second half.

Keeping with the tenor of the game up to this point, the Dolphins were in scoring distance at the start of the second half only to have Woodley throw an interception in the hands of Washington's Mark Moseley on the 5.

The Redskins marched back but could get only a field goal, as the third quarter neared completion.

On a first-down play from Washington's 18, Theismann, scrambling to his left, threw toward the wide receiver, Charlie Brown. But 6-foot, 6-inch Kim Bokamper—one of the busiest of the Killer B's—stepped in front and nearly intercepted Theismann's pass. He bobbled the ball, and Theismann made a great play by racing over and knocking the ball to the ground. Bokamper was at the 5-yard line. It would have been an easy score, and the Dolphins would have taken a large 24-13 lead. Instead it remained 17-13, and the Redskins were still in striking distance.

All this time, John Riggins, the Redskins' do-it-all running back, had been hitting the Miami line and virtually wearing it down. He kept churning for the kind of yardage that kept the Redskins in the game and always threatening.

Now it came down to what was perhaps the most crucial play of the day.

The score was 17-13 Miami, with less than five minutes to go in the final period. It was fourth and less than a yard at the Miami 43. The Dolphins called

time to set their defense for an expected run by Riggins. The 33-year-old fullback then took a hand-off and turned the left end. Cornerback Don McNeal made a lunge, but came away only with sore hands as Riggins barreled right through him. There was no one left. Riggins sped the rest of the way for the touchdown that turned the game around.

The Dolphins couldn't do anything with the ball when they got it. In fact, their offense was so befuddled by the Redskins that Woodley could not complete a single pass in his eight attempts in the second half.

So the Redskins got the ball back. It was Riggins right, Riggins left, Riggins up the middle.

He moved the ball downfield, to the Miami 6. From there, Theismann rolled out and hit Charlie Brown with a pass.

Washington 27, Miami 17, and though there were three minutes remaining in the game, that's precisely the way the game would end.

Super Bowl Summary

Scoring

FIRST QUARTER

Dolphins 7, Redskins 0—Cefalo, 76, pass from Woodley (von Schamann, kick) at 6:49. 80 yards in 2 plays. Cefalo catches pass at Dolphins' 45 and runs for score.

SECOND QUARTER

Dolphins 7, Redskins 3—FG, 32, Moseley, at 0:21. 32 yards in 9 plays. Key play: Woodley's fumble, when sacked by Manley, is recovered by Butz.

Dolphins 10, Redskins 3—FG, 20, von Schamann, at 9:00. 50 yards in 13 plays. Key plays: Rick Walker, 42, kickoff return; Dolphins control ball for 8:39.

Dolphins 10, Redskins 10—Garrett, 4, pass from Theismann (Moseley, kick) at 13:09. 80 yards in 11 plays. Key plays: Rick Walker, 27, pass from Theismann; Theismann, 12, run on a scramble.

Dolphins 17, Redskins 10—Fulton Walker, 98, return of Moseley kickoff (von Schamann, kick) at 13:22.

THIRD QUARTER

Dolphins 17, Redskins 13—FG, 20, Moseley, at 6:51. 61 yards in 6 plays. Key play: Garrett, 44, reverse on handoff from Riggins.

FOURTH QUARTER

Redskins 20, Dolphins 17—Riggins, 43, run on fourth-and-1 (Moseley, kick) at 4:59. 52 yards in 4 plays.

Redskins 27, Dolphins 17—Brown, 6, pass from Theismann (Moseley, kick) at 13:05. Key play: Brown, 9, rollout pass from Theismann on third-and-9 for first-and-goal at 9.

Statistics

REDSKINS 27, DOLPHINS 17

| | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|---|----|-----|
| Miami..... | 7 | 10 | 0 | 0 | —17 |
| Washington.. | 0 | 10 | 3 | 14 | —27 |

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Miami, Franklin 16-49, Nathan 7-26, Woodley 4-16, Vigorito 1-4, Harris 1-1. Washington, Riggins 38-166, Garrett 1-44, Harmon 9-40, Theismann 3-20, R. Walker 1-6.

PASSING—Miami, Woodley 4-14-97-1, Strock 0-3-0-0. Washington, Theismann 15-23-143-2.

RECEIVING—Miami, Cefalo 2-82, Harris 2-15. Washington, C. Brown 6-60, Warren 5-28, Garrett 2-13, R. Walker 1-27, Riggins 1-15.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—none.

Attendance—103,667.

| | Miami | Wash. |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| First downs..... | 9 | 24 |
| By Rushing..... | 7 | 14 |
| By Passing..... | 2 | 9 |
| By Penalty..... | 0 | 1 |
| Rushes-yards.... | 29-96 | 52-276 |
| Avg yds per rush | 3.3 | 5.3 |
| Passing yards... | 80 | 124 |
| Return yards.... | 22 | 52 |
| Kickoff ret yds... | 222 | 57 |
| Passes..... | 4-17-1 | 15-23-2 |
| Sacks By..... | 3-19 | 1-17 |
| Punts..... | 6-38 | 3-46 |
| Fumbles-lost.... | 2-1 | 0-0 |
| Penalties-yards .. | 4-55 | 5-36 |
| Time of Possession | 23:45 | 36:15 |

Pro Bowl

NFC 20, AFC 19

Aloha Stadium, Honolulu

Sunday, February 6, 1983

An outstanding Super Bowl followed by a terrific Pro Bowl? Impossible? Well, let's say implausible. Whatever the word, the fact is, it happened.

Just one week after the exciting Super Bowl XVII victory of Washington over Miami, 27–17, the National Conference whipped the American Conference 20–19 on a play in the last 31 seconds of the final quarter.

The rap on the Super Bowl for these many years is that, because of the pressure, the players have been too tight. The rap on the Pro Bowl is that, because of the lack of pressure, the players have been too loose.

For a number of years, players no more have wanted to play in the Pro Bowl than they would have wanted to order castor oil for dinner. Often, the players had not wanted to be in the game at all. It comes after the regular and championship games are played—unlike baseball, basketball, and hockey



RUGGED
BACKPACKS

GARMENT
BAGS
LUGGAGE

all-star games that are played in the middle of their seasons. And most players want to stay home or go on vacation.

And players with teams that were eliminated from the playoffs had not been in action for nearly a month and a half. In years gone by, defectors from the ranks of the Pro Bowl copped out for excuses ranging from sore arm to a "prior commitment."

Well, the year before last, an inducement had been added. The games would be played in Honolulu, and the trip, with players' families, would be a free vacation to a beautiful island paid for by the league.

Last season, a second "carrot" was added. The payoffs were doubled, and each winning player now would receive \$10,000.

And for the second straight year, it was a thrilling game.

In the 1982 game, Nick Lowery kicked a 23-yard field goal from the NFC's 5-yard line with the game tied 13-13, to give the AFC the victory.

This year, a kick—an extra point by Washington's Mark Moseley—again was the deciding factor.

The score was 19-13, in favor of the American Conference when Danny White, the Dallas quarterback, led the Nationals downfield, while racing the clock.

White, who had been under heavy pressure all through the drive, led the team to a fourth-and-7 situation at the AFC 25. Now, he was chased again and rolled right, out of the pocket, and saw John Jefferson, the Packers' standout receiver. Jefferson

Dennis Thurman scores.

was supposed to be running in a pattern, but he moved toward the sideline with White and White threw to him. Jefferson made a diving catch just inbounds for 14 yards to the 11.

"A lucky catch," said Jefferson.

"The play of the game," said White.

On the following play, with Mike Haynes, the Patriots' safety, apparently overplaying Jefferson, the Packer receiver moved past him and White again threw a perfect pass. Jefferson snared it in the end zone, with 31 seconds remaining of the last quarter.

"That last march was a desperation drive," said Jefferson after the game. "We kept up a guessing game with the defense. They would first take away the inside, then they'd take away the outside. At the end, we just guessed right."

Then Mark Moseley kicked the extra point to make it 20-19. It was the last score of the game.

The AFC broke on top of the game when Dan Fouts of San Diego hit the Jets' Wesley Walker with a 34-yard touchdown pass in the first quarter. The AFC led, 12-10, at halftime and by 19-10 going into the final period, before Moseley kicked his second field goal of the game.

Moseley also missed three field goals and had a fourth blocked, but the AFC's Rolf Benirschke didn't fare much better—he missed two, and made one, from the 29.

Attendance of 49,883 was not a sellout, but after the game the NFL announced extension of the Pro Bowl contract in Honolulu for two more years.

The cheering you heard was from the Pro Bowl players.

III
1982
STATISTICS



AFC Leading Scorers

Scoring—Touchdowns

| | Tot | Rush | Pass | Ret | Pts |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Allen, Los Angeles | 14 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 84 |
| Chandler, San Diego | 9 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 54 |
| Muncie, San Diego | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 54 |
| Franklin, Miami | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 42 |
| Johnson, Cincinnati | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 42 |
| McNeil, New York | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 42 |
| Stallworth, Pittsburgh | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 42 |

Scoring—Kicking

| | XP—XPA | FG—FGA | Pts |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Benirschke, San Diego | 32—34 | 16—22 | 80 |
| Lowery, Kansas City | 17—17 | 19—24 | 74 |
| Breech, Cincinnati | 25—26 | 14—18 | 67 |
| von Schamann, Miami | 21—22 | 15—20 | 66 |
| Bahr, Los Angeles | 32—33 | 10—16 | 62 |
| Leahy, New York | 26—31 | 11—17 | 59 |

Andra Franklin (37) takes a handoff.



NFC Leading Scorers

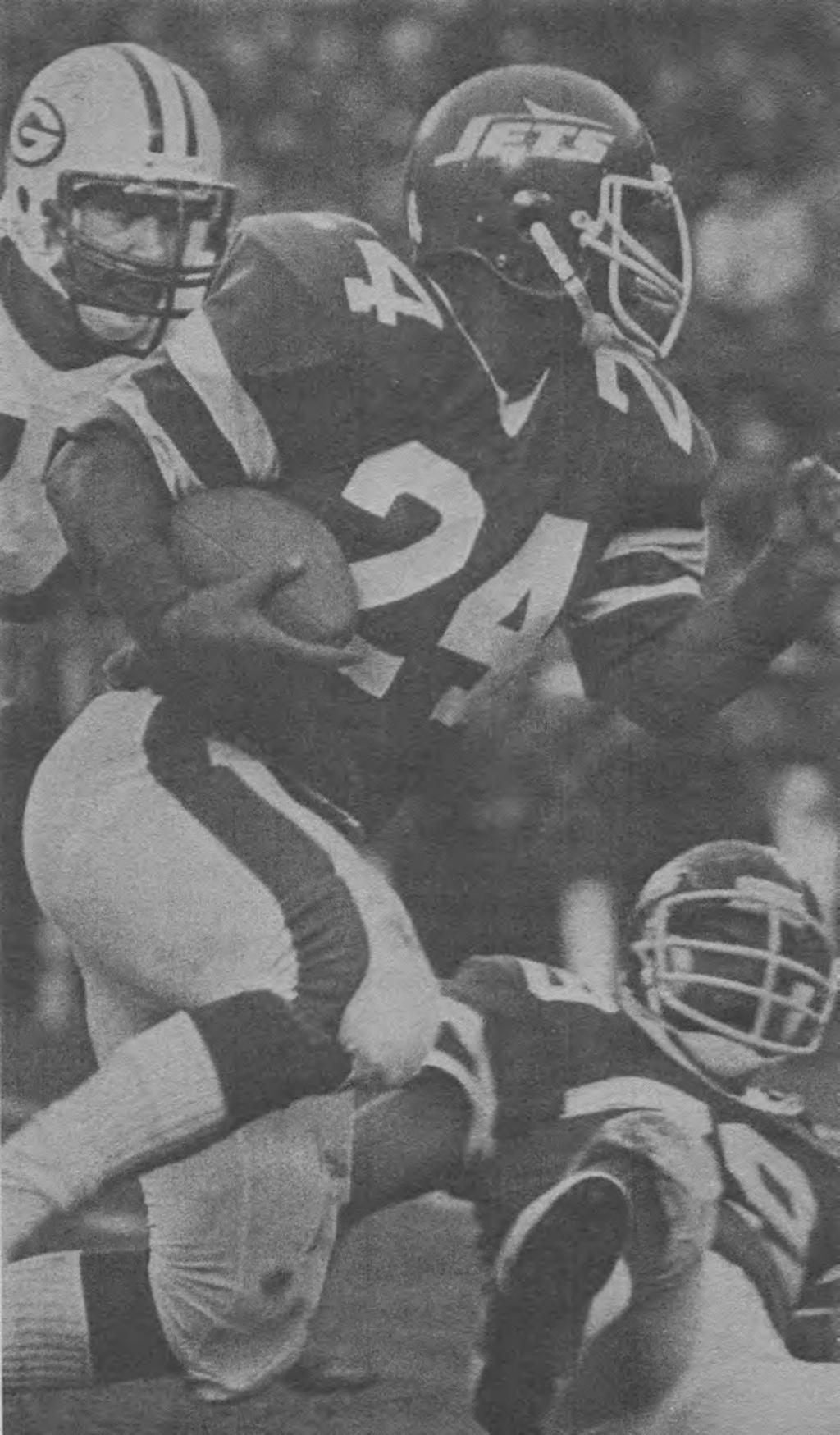
Scoring—Touchdowns

| | Tot | Rush | Pass | Ret | Pts |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Tyler, Los Angeles | 13 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 78 |
| Ivery, Green Bay | 10 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 60 |
| Montgomery, Philadelphia ... | 9 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 54 |
| Brown, Washington | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 48 |
| Moore, San Francisco | 8 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 48 |
| Andrews, Atlanta | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 42 |

Scoring—Kicking

| | XP—XPA | FG—FGA | Pts |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Moseley, Washington | 16—19 | 20—21 | 76 |
| Capece, Tampa Bay | 14—14 | 18—23 | 68 |
| Stenerud, Green Bay | 25—27 | 13—18 | 64 |
| Wersching, San Fran | 23—25 | 12—17 | 59 |
| Septien, Dallas | 28—28 | 10—14 | 58 |
| Danelo, New York | 18—18 | 12—21 | 54 |
| Luckhurst, Atlanta | 21—22 | 10—14 | 51 |
| Lansford, Los Angeles | 23—24 | 9—15 | 50 |
| Murray, Detroit | 16—16 | 11—12 | 49 |

Joe Cribbs makes it in the mud.



AFC Leading Rushers

| | Att | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| McNeil, New York | 151 | 786 | 5.2 | 6 |
| Franklin, Miami | 177 | 701 | 4.0 | 7 |
| Allen, Los Angeles | 160 | 697 | 4.4 | 11 |
| Cribbs, Buffalo | 134 | 633 | 4.7 | 3 |
| Collins, New England | 164 | 632 | 3.9 | 1 |
| Johnson, Cincinnati | 156 | 622 | 4.0 | 7 |
| Harris, Pittsburgh | 140 | 604 | 4.3 | 2 |
| Muncie, San Diego | 138 | 569 | 4.1 | 8 |
| Campbell, Houston | 157 | 538 | 3.4 | 2 |
| Pruitt, Cleveland | 143 | 516 | 3.6 | 3 |
| Brooks, San Diego | 87 | 430 | 4.9 | 6 |
| Leaks, Buffalo | 97 | 405 | 4.2 | 5 |
| van Eeghen, New England . | 82 | 386 | 4.7 | 0 |
| Delaney, Kansas City | 95 | 380 | 4.0 | 0 |
| Willhite, Denver | 70 | 347 | 5.0 | 2 |

Freeman McNeil, the leading rusher



NFC Leading Rushers

| | Att | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Dorsett, Dallas..... | 177 | 745 | 4.2 | 5 |
| Sims, Detroit | 172 | 639 | 3.7 | 4 |
| Payton, Chicago..... | 148 | 596 | 4.0 | 1 |
| Anderson, St. Louis | 145 | 587 | 4.1 | 3 |
| Andrews, Atlanta..... | 139 | 573 | 4.1 | 5 |
| Tyler, Los Angeles | 137 | 564 | 4.1 | 9 |
| Riggins, Washington..... | 177 | 553 | 3.1 | 3 |
| G. Rogers, New Orleans | 122 | 535 | 4.4 | 3 |
| Brown, Minnesota..... | 120 | 515 | 4.3 | 1 |
| Montgomery, Philadelphia..... | 114 | 515 | 4.5 | 7 |
| Ivery, Green Bay..... | 127 | 453 | 3.6 | 9 |
| Woolfolk, New York..... | 112 | 439 | 3.9 | 2 |
| Wilson, New Orleans..... | 103 | 413 | 4.0 | 3 |
| Wilder, Tampa Bay..... | 83 | 324 | 3.9 | 3 |
| Riggs, Atlanta | 78 | 299 | 3.8 | 5 |
| Moore, San Francisco | 85 | 281 | 3.3 | 4 |

Ottis Anderson, the brightest Cardinal

AFC Leading Passers

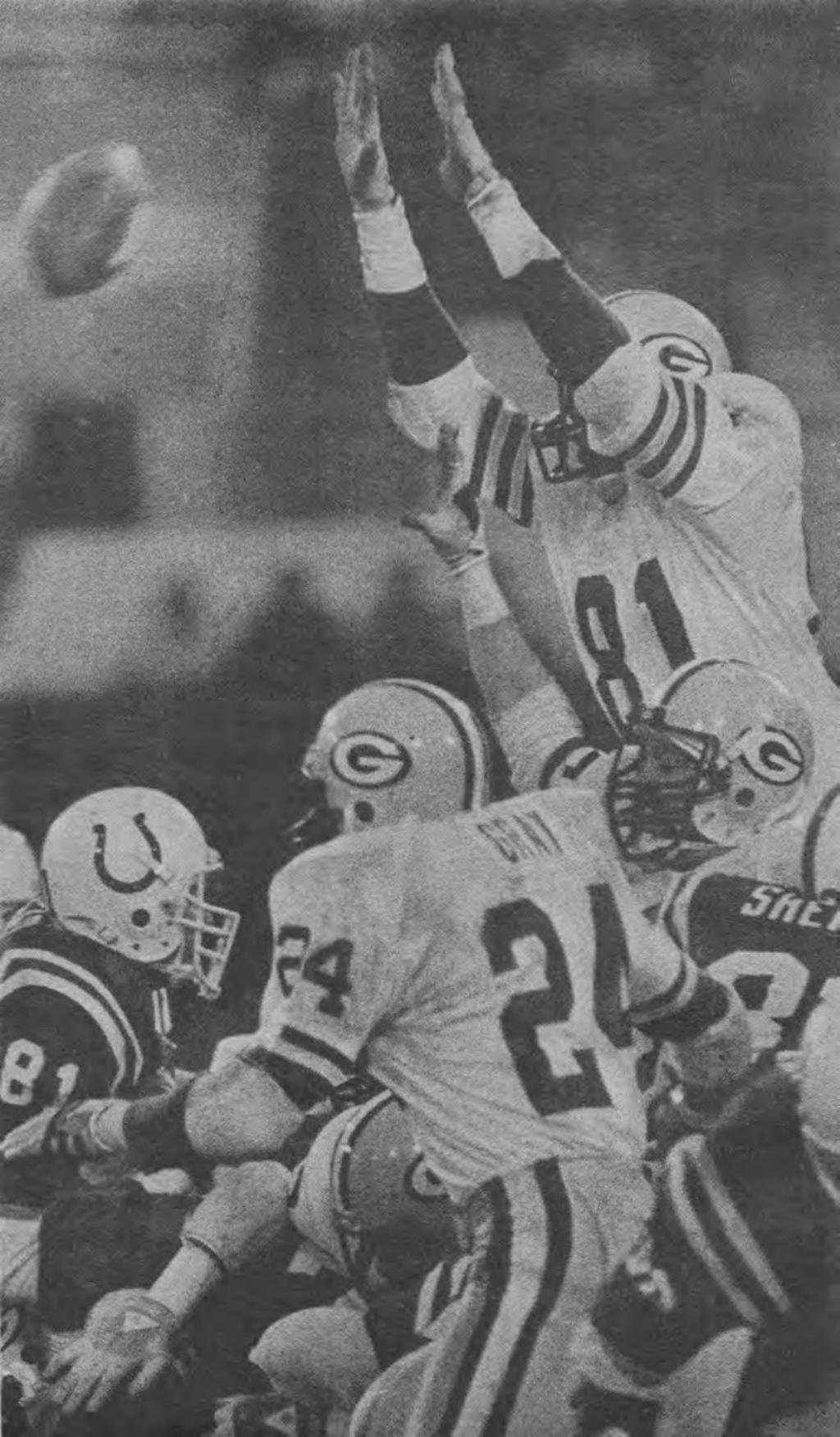
(Minimum of 108 Attempts)

| | Att | Comp | Pct | Yards Gained | Avg Yd Gained | TD Pass | Pct TD | Int | Pct Int | Rating |
|----------------------------|-----|------|------|--------------|---------------|---------|--------|-----|---------|--------|
| Anderson, Cincinnati..... | 309 | 218 | 70.6 | 2495 | 8.07 | 12 | 3.9 | 9 | 2.9 | 95.5 |
| Fouts, San Diego | 330 | 204 | 61.8 | 2889 | 8.75 | 17 | 5.2 | 11 | 3.3 | 93.6 |
| Todd, New York | 261 | 153 | 58.6 | 1961 | 7.51 | 14 | 5.4 | 8 | 3.1 | 87.3 |
| Grogan, New England..... | 122 | 66 | 54.1 | 930 | 7.62 | 7 | 5.7 | 4 | 3.3 | 84.2 |
| Bradshaw, Pittsburgh | 240 | 127 | 52.9 | 1768 | 7.37 | 17 | 7.1 | 11 | 4.6 | 81.4 |
| Plunkett, Los Angeles..... | 261 | 152 | 58.2 | 2035 | 7.80 | 14 | 5.4 | 15 | 5.7 | 77.3 |
| Kenney, Kansas City..... | 169 | 95 | 56.2 | 1192 | 7.05 | 7 | 4.1 | 6 | 3.6 | 77.0 |
| DeBerg, Denver | 223 | 131 | 58.7 | 1405 | 6.30 | 7 | 3.1 | 11 | 4.9 | 67.2 |
| Nielsen, Houston..... | 161 | 87 | 54.0 | 1005 | 6.24 | 6 | 3.7 | 8 | 5.0 | 64.6 |
| Woodley, Miami..... | 179 | 98 | 54.7 | 1080 | 6.03 | 5 | 2.8 | 8 | 4.5 | 63.4 |
| Page, Baltimore..... | 221 | 111 | 50.2 | 1281 | 5.80 | 5 | 2.3 | 7 | 3.2 | 62.4 |
| Zorn, Seattle | 245 | 126 | 51.4 | 1540 | 6.29 | 7 | 2.9 | 11 | 4.5 | 62.1 |
| Manning, Houston | 132 | 67 | 50.8 | 880 | 6.67 | 6 | 4.5 | 8 | 6.1 | 61.8 |
| Sipe, Cleveland..... | 185 | 101 | 54.6 | 1064 | 5.75 | 4 | 2.2 | 8 | 4.3 | 61.0 |
| McDonald, Cleveland..... | 149 | 73 | 49.0 | 993 | 6.66 | 5 | 3.4 | 8 | 5.4 | 59.5 |
| Ferguson, Buffalo | 264 | 144 | 54.5 | 1597 | 6.05 | 7 | 2.7 | 16 | 6.1 | 56.3 |

NFC Leading Passers

(Minimum of 108 Attempts)

| | Att | Comp | Pct | Yards Gained | Avg Yd Gained | TD Pass | Pct TD | Int | Pct Int | Rating |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|------|--------------|---------------|---------|--------|-----|---------|--------|
| Theismann, Washington..... | 252 | 161 | 63.9 | 2033 | 8.07 | 13 | 5.2 | 9 | 3.6 | 91.3 |
| D. White, Dallas..... | 247 | 156 | 63.2 | 2079 | 8.42 | 16 | 6.5 | 12 | 4.9 | 91.1 |
| Montana, San Francisco..... | 346 | 213 | 61.6 | 2613 | 7.55 | 17 | 4.9 | 11 | 3.2 | 87.9 |
| McMahon, Chicago..... | 210 | 120 | 57.1 | 1501 | 7.15 | 9 | 4.3 | 7 | 3.3 | 80.1 |
| Bartkowski, Atlanta..... | 262 | 166 | 63.4 | 1905 | 7.27 | 8 | 3.1 | 11 | 4.2 | 78.1 |
| Ferragamo, Los Angeles..... | 209 | 118 | 56.5 | 1609 | 7.70 | 9 | 4.3 | 9 | 4.3 | 77.7 |
| Jaworski, Philadelphia..... | 286 | 167 | 58.4 | 2076 | 7.26 | 12 | 4.2 | 12 | 4.2 | 77.5 |
| Kramer, Minnesota..... | 308 | 176 | 57.1 | 2037 | 6.61 | 15 | 4.9 | 12 | 3.9 | 77.3 |
| Dickey, Green Bay..... | 218 | 124 | 56.9 | 1790 | 8.21 | 12 | 5.5 | 14 | 6.4 | 75.4 |
| Brunner, New York..... | 298 | 161 | 54.0 | 2017 | 6.77 | 10 | 3.4 | 9 | 3.0 | 74.1 |
| Stabler, New Orleans..... | 189 | 117 | 61.9 | 1343 | 7.11 | 6 | 3.2 | 10 | 5.3 | 71.9 |
| Lomax, St. Louis..... | 205 | 109 | 53.2 | 1367 | 6.67 | 5 | 2.4 | 6 | 2.9 | 70.1 |
| Williams, Tampa Bay..... | 307 | 164 | 53.4 | 2071 | 6.75 | 9 | 2.9 | 11 | 3.6 | 69.4 |
| Danielson, Detroit..... | 197 | 100 | 50.8 | 1343 | 6.82 | 10 | 5.1 | 14 | 7.1 | 60.3 |



AFC Leading Pass Receivers

| | No | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|--------------------------------|----|------|------|-----|
| Winslow, San Diego..... | 54 | 721 | 13.4 | 6 |
| Chandler, San Diego..... | 49 | 1032 | 21.1 | 9 |
| Collinsworth, Cincinnati | 49 | 700 | 14.3 | 1 |
| Newsome, Cleveland | 49 | 633 | 12.9 | 3 |
| Ross, Cincinnati | 47 | 508 | 10.8 | 3 |
| Christensen, Los Angeles | 42 | 510 | 12.1 | 4 |
| Marshall, Kansas City | 40 | 549 | 13.7 | 3 |
| Walker, New York..... | 39 | 620 | 15.9 | 6 |
| Allen, Los Angeles | 38 | 401 | 10.6 | 3 |
| Parros, Denver | 37 | 259 | 7.0 | 2 |
| Casper, Houston | 36 | 573 | 15.9 | 6 |
| Watson, Denver | 36 | 555 | 15.4 | 2 |
| Joiner, San Diego | 36 | 545 | 15.1 | 0 |
| Largent, Seattle..... | 34 | 493 | 14.5 | 3 |
| White, Cleveland..... | 34 | 283 | 8.3 | 0 |
| Johnson, Cincinnati..... | 31 | 267 | 8.6 | 0 |
| Harris, Pittsburgh | 31 | 249 | 8.0 | 0 |
| Branch, Los Angeles | 30 | 575 | 19.2 | 4 |
| Morgan, New England | 28 | 584 | 20.9 | 3 |
| Lewis, Buffalo | 28 | 443 | 15.8 | 2 |
| Feacher, Cleveland | 28 | 408 | 14.6 | 3 |

Gary Lewis leaping to block a kick

NFC Leading Pass Receivers

| | No | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| D. Clark, San Francisco | 60 | 913 | 15.2 | 5 |
| Wilder, Tampa Bay | 53 | 466 | 8.8 | 1 |
| Andrews, Atlanta | 42 | 503 | 12.0 | 2 |
| Tyler, Los Angeles | 38 | 375 | 9.9 | 4 |
| Moore, San Francisco | 37 | 405 | 10.9 | 4 |
| Tilley, St. Louis | 36 | 465 | 12.9 | 2 |
| Suhey, Chicago | 36 | 333 | 9.3 | 0 |
| Lofton, Green Bay | 35 | 696 | 19.9 | 4 |
| Carmichael, Philadelphia | 35 | 540 | 15.4 | 4 |
| T. Hill, Dallas | 35 | 526 | 15.0 | 1 |
| Monk, Washington | 35 | 447 | 12.8 | 1 |
| Smith, Philadelphia | 34 | 475 | 14.0 | 1 |
| Sims, Detroit | 34 | 342 | 10.1 | 0 |
| Brown, Washington | 32 | 690 | 21.6 | 8 |
| Green, St. Louis | 32 | 453 | 14.2 | 3 |
| Payton, Chicago | 32 | 311 | 9.7 | 0 |
| Guman, Los Angeles | 31 | 310 | 10.0 | 0 |
| Brown, Minnesota | 31 | 207 | 6.7 | 2 |

AFC Interception Leaders

| | No | Yds | Long | TDs |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Riley, Cincinnati | 5 | 88 | 56 | 1 |
| Jackson, New York | 5 | 84 | 77 | 1 |
| Woodruff, Pittsburgh | 5 | 53 | 30 | 0 |
| Shell, Pittsburgh | 5 | 27 | 18 | 0 |

NFC Interception Leaders

| | No | Yds | Long | TDs |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Walls, Dallas | 7 | 61 | 37 | 0 |
| Watkins, Detroit | 5 | 22 | 20 | 0 |
| Edwards, Philadelphia | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Jackson, New York | 4 | 75 | 37 | 0 |
| Schmidt, Chicago | 4 | 39 | 29 | 0 |
| Teal, Minnesota | 4 | 15 | 13 | 0 |
| Young, Philadelphia | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

AFC Leading Punters

| | No | Yds | Avg | Long |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Prestridge, Denver | 45 | 2026 | 45.0 | 65 |
| Stark, Baltimore | 46 | 2044 | 44.4 | 60 |
| Camarillo, New England | 49 | 2140 | 43.7 | 76 |
| Gossett, Kansas City | 33 | 1366 | 41.4 | 56 |
| Buford, San Diego | 21 | 868 | 41.3 | 71 |
| James, Houston | 43 | 1741 | 40.5 | 56 |
| Goodson, Pittsburgh | 49 | 1981 | 40.4 | 66 |
| Guy, Los Angeles | 47 | 1839 | 39.1 | 57 |
| Cox, Cleveland | 48 | 1877 | 39.1 | 52 |
| McInally, Cincinnati | 31 | 1201 | 38.7 | 53 |
| Orosz, Miami | 35 | 1353 | 38.7 | 61 |
| Parsley, Houston | 24 | 926 | 38.6 | 51 |
| Ramsey, New York | 35 | 1348 | 38.5 | 54 |
| West, Seattle | 48 | 1835 | 38.2 | 52 |
| Cater, Buffalo | 35 | 1328 | 37.9 | 61 |

NFC Leading Punters

| | No | Yds | Avg | Long |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Birdsong, St. Louis | 54 | 2365 | 43.8 | 65 |
| Misko, Los Angeles | 45 | 1961 | 43.6 | 59 |
| Erxleben, New Orleans | 46 | 1976 | 43.0 | 60 |
| Jennings, New York | 49 | 2096 | 42.8 | 73 |
| D. White, Dallas | 37 | 1542 | 41.7 | 56 |
| Swider, Tampa Bay | 39 | 1620 | 41.5 | 59 |
| Parsons, Chicago | 58 | 2394 | 41.3 | 81 |
| Skladany, Detroit | 36 | 1483 | 41.2 | 59 |
| Coleman, Minnesota | 58 | 2384 | 41.1 | 67 |
| Runager, Philadelphia | 44 | 1784 | 40.5 | 53 |
| Stachowicz, Green Bay | 42 | 1687 | 40.2 | 53 |
| Smigelsky, Atlanta | 26 | 1000 | 38.5 | 54 |
| Miller, San Francisco | 44 | 1676 | 38.1 | 80 |
| Hayes, Washington | 51 | 1937 | 38.0 | 58 |



AFC Punt Return Leaders

| | No | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|-----------------------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| Upchurch, Denver | 15 | 242 | 16.1 | 2 |
| Brooks, San Diego | 12 | 138 | 11.5 | 0 |
| Johns, Seattle | 19 | 210 | 11.1 | 0 |
| Woods, Pittsburgh | 13 | 142 | 10.9 | 0 |
| Vigorito, Miami | 20 | 192 | 9.6 | 1 |
| R. Smith, New England | 16 | 139 | 8.7 | 0 |
| Hancock, Kansas City | 12 | 103 | 8.6 | 0 |
| Harper, New York | 23 | 184 | 8.0 | 0 |
| Sydnor, Pittsburgh | 22 | 172 | 7.8 | 0 |
| Pruitt, Los Angeles | 27 | 209 | 7.7 | 0 |

NFC Punt Return Leaders

| | No | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|------------------------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| B. Johnson, Atlanta | 24 | 273 | 11.4 | 0 |
| Irvin, Los Angeles | 22 | 242 | 11.0 | 1 |
| Martin, Detroit | 26 | 275 | 10.6 | 0 |
| Solomon, San Francisco | 13 | 122 | 9.4 | 0 |
| Bright, New York | 37 | 325 | 8.8 | 0 |
| Payton, Minnesota | 22 | 179 | 8.1 | 0 |
| Nelms, Washington | 32 | 252 | 7.9 | 0 |
| Fellows, Dallas | 25 | 189 | 7.6 | 0 |
| Epps, Green Bay | 20 | 150 | 7.5 | 0 |
| T. Bell, Tampa Bay | 9 | 62 | 6.9 | 0 |
| Groth, New Orleans | 21 | 144 | 6.9 | 0 |

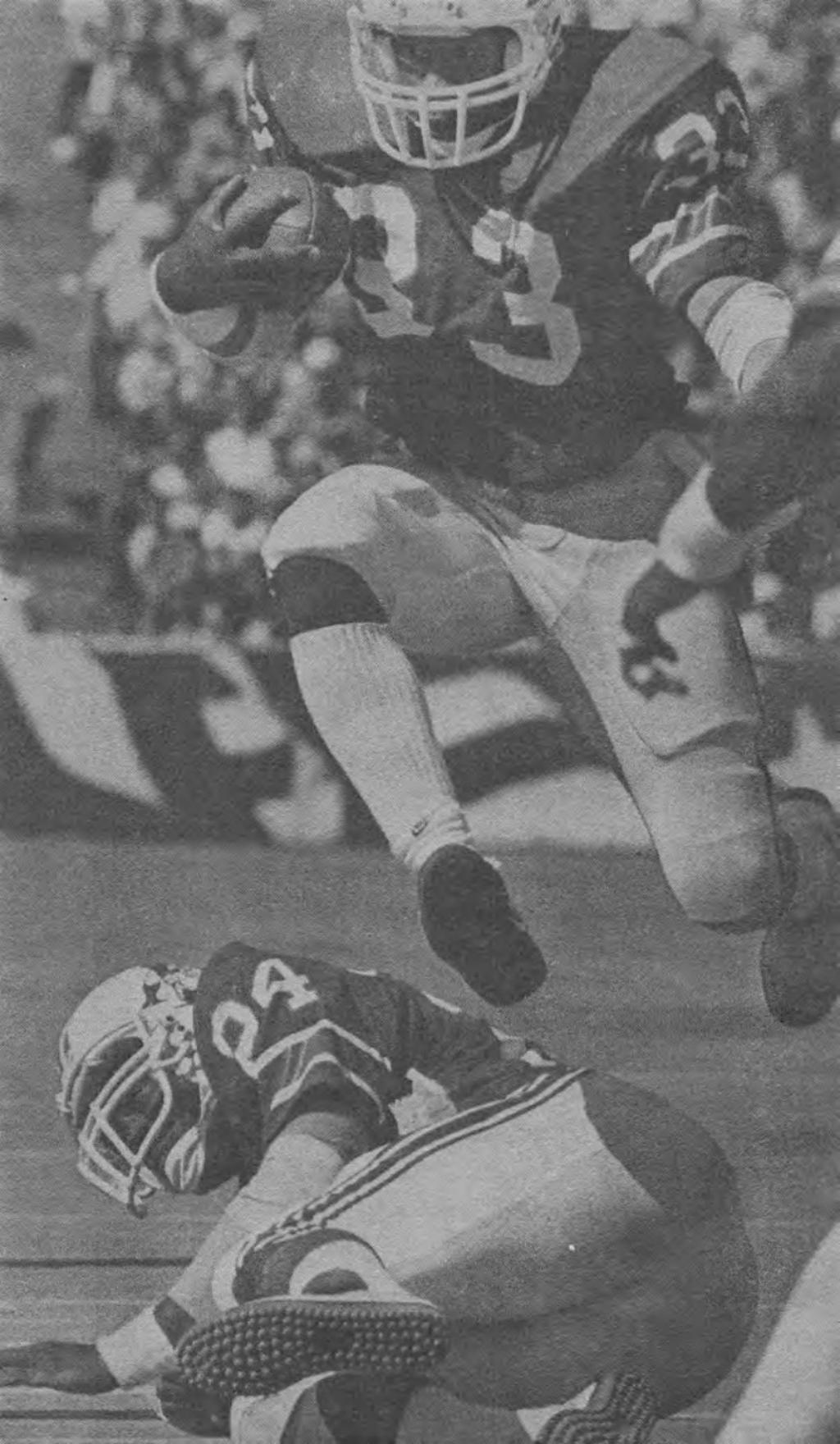
AFC Kickoff Return Leaders

| | No | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Mosley, Buffalo | 18 | 487 | 27.1 | 0 |
| Pruitt, Los Angeles | 14 | 371 | 26.5 | 0 |
| R. Smith, New England | 24 | 567 | 23.6 | 1 |
| Bohannon, Pittsburgh | 14 | 329 | 23.5 | 0 |
| Manning, Denver | 15 | 346 | 23.1 | 0 |
| Brooks, San Diego | 33 | 749 | 22.7 | 0 |
| Walker, Cleveland | 13 | 295 | 22.7 | 0 |
| Hancock, Kansas City | 27 | 609 | 22.6 | 0 |
| Tate, Cincinnati | 14 | 314 | 22.4 | 0 |
| Ivory, Seattle | 10 | 224 | 22.4 | 0 |
| Walker, Miami | 20 | 433 | 21.7 | 0 |

NFC

Kickoff Return Leaders

| | No | Yds | Avg | TDs |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| Hall, Detroit | 16 | 426 | 26.6 | 1 |
| Nelms, Washington | 23 | 557 | 24.2 | 0 |
| Redwine, Minnesota | 12 | 286 | 23.8 | 0 |
| Watts, Chicago | 14 | 330 | 23.6 | 0 |
| Redden, Los Angeles | 22 | 502 | 22.8 | 0 |
| Mitchell, St. Louis | 16 | 364 | 22.8 | 0 |
| Payton, Minnesota | 12 | 271 | 22.6 | 0 |
| Henry, Philadelphia | 24 | 541 | 22.5 | 0 |
| Fellows, Dallas | 16 | 359 | 22.4 | 0 |
| McLemore, San Francisco | 16 | 353 | 22.1 | 0 |
| Rodgers, Green Bay | 20 | 436 | 21.8 | 0 |
| Woolfolk, New York | 20 | 428 | 21.4 | 0 |
| Lawrence, San Francisco | 9 | 190 | 21.1 | 0 |
| Thompson, New Orleans | 10 | 211 | 21.1 | 0 |



1982 Final Standings

American Conference

Final

| Club | W | L | T | Pct | Pts | OP |
|---------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| L.A. Raiders | 8 | 1 | 0 | .889 | 260 | 200 |
| Miami | 7 | 2 | 0 | .778 | 198 | 131 |
| Cincinnati | 7 | 2 | 0 | .778 | 232 | 177 |
| Pittsburgh | 6 | 3 | 0 | .667 | 204 | 146 |
| San Diego | 6 | 3 | 0 | .667 | 288 | 221 |
| New York Jets | 6 | 3 | 0 | .667 | 245 | 166 |
| New England | 5 | 4 | 0 | .556 | 143 | 157 |
| Cleveland | 4 | 5 | 0 | .444 | 140 | 182 |
| Buffalo | 4 | 5 | 0 | .444 | 150 | 154 |
| Seattle | 4 | 5 | 0 | .444 | 127 | 147 |
| Kansas City | 3 | 6 | 0 | .333 | 176 | 184 |
| Denver | 2 | 7 | 0 | .222 | 148 | 226 |
| Houston | 1 | 8 | 0 | .111 | 136 | 245 |
| Baltimore | 0 | 8 | 1 | .056 | 113 | 236 |

National Conference

Final

| Club | W | L | T | Pct | Pts | OP |
|------------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| Washington | 8 | 1 | 0 | .889 | 190 | 128 |
| Dallas | 6 | 3 | 0 | .667 | 126 | 145 |
| Green Bay | 5 | 3 | 1 | .611 | 226 | 169 |
| Minnesota | 5 | 4 | 0 | .556 | 187 | 198 |
| Atlanta | 5 | 4 | 0 | .556 | 183 | 199 |
| St. Louis | 5 | 4 | 0 | .556 | 135 | 170 |
| Tampa Bay | 5 | 4 | 0 | .556 | 158 | 178 |
| Detroit | 4 | 5 | 0 | .444 | 181 | 176 |
| New Orleans | 4 | 5 | 0 | .444 | 129 | 160 |
| New York Giants | 4 | 5 | 0 | .444 | 164 | 160 |
| San Francisco | 3 | 6 | 0 | .333 | 209 | 206 |
| Philadelphia | 3 | 6 | 0 | .333 | 191 | 195 |
| Chicago | 3 | 6 | 0 | .333 | 141 | 174 |
| Los Angeles Rams | 2 | 7 | 0 | .222 | 200 | 250 |

Tony Collins hops to it.



AFC

Team Statistics

For rushing and passing, figure is average per game; for punt and kickoff returns, figure is average per return; and for sacks and turnovers, figure is season total. Figure in bold is conference-leading total.

| | Rushing | | Passing | | Yds/Play | | KO Return | | Punt Return | | Sacks Turnovers | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| | Off | Def | Off | Def | Off | Def | Off | Def | Off | Def | By | Vs |
| Baltimore..... | 116.0 | 163.7 | 159.9 | 202.6 | 4.2 | 5.4 | 17.9 | 21.5 | 5.6 | 8.7 | 11 | 20 |
| Buffalo..... | 152.3 | 114.9 | 172.9 | 144.4 | 4.8 | 4.4 | 22.0 | 17.8 | 4.6 | 3.0 | 12 | 12 |
| Cincinnati..... | 105.4 | 94.4 | 259.9 | 227.0 | 5.4 | 5.3 | 20.7 | 18.9 | 5.6 | 4.0 | 22 | 27 |
| Cleveland..... | 97.0 | 143.6 | 205.0 | 202.4 | 4.4 | 5.2 | 19.8 | 18.4 | 5.8 | 7.2 | 22 | 26 |
| Denver..... | 113.2 | 103.9 | 202.0 | 248.2 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 20.5 | 20.8 | 14.5 | 9.1 | 16 | 25 |
| Houston..... | 88.8 | 136.1 | 174.9 | 245.9 | 4.3 | 5.6 | 20.1 | 21.7 | 5.5 | 8.4 | 31 | 39 |
| Kansas City..... | 104.8 | 118.3 | 172.8 | 185.2 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 21.3 | 18.9 | 8.6 | 15.4 | 15 | 40 |
| Los Angeles..... | 120.0 | 86.4 | 208.3 | 254.2 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 20.9 | 19.8 | 7.7 | 4.2 | 38 | 23 |
| Miami..... | 149.3 | 142.8 | 146.0 | 114.1 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 21.1 | 21.3 | 8.8 | 5.5 | 29 | 11 |
| New England..... | 149.7 | 143.7 | 142.9 | 168.8 | 5.0 | 4.7 | 23.1 | 19.2 | 8.7 | 7.3 | 20 | 15 |
| New York..... | 146.3 | 109.2 | 211.2 | 182.9 | 5.3 | 4.5 | 20.2 | 21.2 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 20 | 23 |
| Pittsburgh..... | 131.9 | 84.7 | 198.1 | 234.7 | 5.1 | 4.8 | 20.3 | 22.8 | 8.8 | 6.5 | 34 | 19 |
| San Diego..... | 124.6 | 106.8 | 325.9 | 254.7 | 6.6 | 5.5 | 19.8 | 19.4 | 11.5 | 12.3 | 19 | 12 |
| Seattle..... | 88.3 | 162.4 | 199.9 | 148.0 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 18.8 | 15.0 | 10.9 | 3.6 | 18 | 36 |

A lights-out game delay in the rain

NFC

Team Statistics

For rushing and passing, figure is average per game; for punt and kickoff returns, figure is average per return; and for sacks and turnovers, figure is season total. Figure in bold is conference-leading total.

| | Rushing | Passing | KO Return | Punt Return | Sacks | Turnovers |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| | Off | Off | Off | Off | By | Vs |
| | Off | Def | Off | Def | Opp | Own |
| Atlanta..... | 131.2 | 116.0 | 198.0 | 200.4 | 4.9 | 5.2 |
| Chicago..... | 110.2 | 100.2 | 167.2 | 216.6 | 4.4 | 4.9 |
| Dallas..... | 145.9 | 112.3 | 209.6 | 193.6 | 5.5 | 4.7 |
| Detroit..... | 113.6 | 94.9 | 168.0 | 207.6 | 4.2 | 4.6 |
| Green Bay..... | 120.1 | 103.6 | 203.2 | 197.2 | 5.0 | 4.4 |
| Los Angeles..... | 113.9 | 133.6 | 222.1 | 236.8 | 5.4 | 5.5 |
| Minnesota..... | 101.3 | 113.3 | 218.6 | 208.3 | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| New Orleans..... | 139.7 | 108.2 | 155.3 | 181.4 | 4.4 | 4.9 |
| New York..... | 93.6 | 124.2 | 209.7 | 174.0 | 4.9 | 4.7 |
| Philadelphia..... | 92.1 | 114.6 | 206.2 | 211.9 | 5.1 | 4.8 |
| St. Louis..... | 134.3 | 110.6 | 148.1 | 205.9 | 4.4 | 5.0 |
| San Francisco..... | 82.2 | 133.2 | 278.0 | 204.7 | 5.5 | 5.1 |
| Tampa Bay..... | 105.8 | 117.6 | 215.9 | 153.8 | 4.9 | 4.3 |
| Washington..... | 126.7 | 105.1 | 205.0 | 179.3 | 5.0 | 4.6 |

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